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R A N D O M   S H O T S

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AND

S O U T H E R N   B R E E Z E S,

CONTAINING

CRITICAL REMARKS ON THE SOUTHERN STATES  
AND SOUTHERN INSTITUTIONS,

WITH

SEMI-SERIOUS OBSERVATIONS ON MEN AND MANNERS.

BY

LOUIS FITZGERALD TASISTRO,

AUTHOR OF

"THE REVOLUTION OF JULY," "PHRENOLOGIST'S TRAVELS IN THE MOON,"  
"REMINISCENCES OF BEAR-HUNTING IN MOLDAVIA,"  
&c., &c., &c.

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### CHAPTER XV.

**A** Visit to the Battle-field of New-Orleans.—Thoughts thereon.—Another Specimen of Creole Nobility.—Anecdote of a Parisian Lady, a Marquis, a Monkey, and a *Diplomat*.—Requisites for a perfect Gentleman.—Treatment of Slaves.—Character of Planters vindicated.—Apology for National Egotism.—General Jackson and his famous Defence of New-Orleans.—Remarks on his Military Skill.—Play one Night at the St. Charles.—Theatricals on Sunday.—Ranger.—Buckstone.—Mrs. Fitzwilliam.—Ancient and Modern Drama.—Spirit of the Crusades.—The Truths of Christianity Expounded by means of Dramatic Representation.—Love of Pleasure, and its debasing Tendencies.—Masked Balls in New-Orleans.—Description of their Character.—Their Pernicious Consequences.—Love of Gaming.—Portrait of a Gambler.

THE first object I was bent upon accomplishing, on my return to the "Crescent City," was a pilgrimage to the celebrated battle-field where General Jackson immortalized himself by his masterly defence, and British valour was compelled to yield to American patriotism. I always took an especial delight in visiting scenes of this description. I like to trace the ground where hostile columns have marched and countermarched—where isolated intrepidity has baffled the attack of numbers, or the hero fallen in pious submission to the heavenly decree. I like to picture to myself the last struggles of the expiring soldier—to note the alternations of despair and hope as the shores of life recede from view, or the vital principle shoots upward like the flickering flame

from an almost extinguished fire. I like, in short, to contemplate, though but in imagination, the wild conflict of human interests and feelings which is so vividly portrayed during a general action, showing how much more effectually and impressively truth goes about her work than fiction.

An acquaintance which I had had the good fortune to form with a Creole family, whose estates lay in the immediate neighbourhood of the battle-field, afforded me many opportunities to gratify my wishes. Monsieur P\*\*\*\*\* is another noble specimen of the Louisiana aristocracy; but yet very different from those I have already had occasion to allude to. He may be said, in fact, to belong to an exclusive class, if the term exclusiveness can be applied to any phase of society existing under a republican government. Still there is a class of this description in New-Orleans. It is composed of the earliest French settlers, persons who can boast of high lineage and proud European connexions, and in whom, more than in any other set of men, are centred all those peculiar qualities which have always been supposed to constitute the essence of Southern chivalry. I remember a saying of a Parisian lady which so completely imbodyes my meaning as to the terms which should be applied in designating this class of *Creoles*, that I will mention it. First of all, however, I must relate the anecdote which gave occasion to it.

Wishing to be *au fait* in the art of giving and receiving so extensively practised in Paris on New-year's day, I paid a visit to the Comtesse de —, judging that her youth, beauty, and rank would command numerous offerings. At one o'clock the countess prepared to conquer admiration by calling up smiles, dimples, and all the artillery of her charms. The first arrival was Monsieur le Marquis de —. On his name being announced, cu-

riosity prompted me to look towards the door, but for some moments I perceived nothing but a powdered head, which almost touched the ground, the remainder of the noble personage being still in the antechamber. By degrees, however, he advanced, and again performed so low an obeisance, that, in point of form, one might have mistaken him for a pair of sugar-tongs or a triangle. The third salutation happily brought him *vis-à-vis* the lady of the mansion, whose hand he embraced with an ardour rather suited to nineteen than ninety. Madame playfully repulsed his raptures, and performed the coquette so naturally, that the poor marquis at four-score-and-ten imagined himself to be a very dangerous fellow; for a French woman possesses, to a superior degree, the talent of flattering the *amour propre* of the other sex, without, however, departing from the laws of modesty or losing her own dignity. After a few minutes' converse, or, rather, display of compliments, which, from their exaggeration, savoured entirely of the old school, M. le Marquis requested permission to ring the bell; this being accorded, he called for his servants. A *chasseur*, covered with gold lace, and having the air of a prince, entered the room, leading a monkey, *tel maître, tel singe*. This animal was a fac-simile of his master, at least with regard to *tournure*, bows, and graces. "*Oh le joli singe! qu'il est gentil! qu'il est charmant!*" cried the countess, with a gravity of countenance an American woman could hardly have commanded. The monkey was then ordered to kneel at madame's feet, and avow itself her slave by presenting to her the golden chain which was around its neck, and clasped together by a large diamond. This token of friendship, or of admiration, was received with easy gracefulness on the part of the countess, who requested the marquis to render it still more valuable by placing



it himself about her neck, which ceremony entitled him to a salutation on each cheek. After recommending to *Monsieur le Singe* to be *sage, docile, et attentif* to madame, the antiquated lover took his leave with a rather triumphant step, though none of his bows or manœuvres were forgotten. As soon as he had made his exit the countess gave way to a burst of laughter. "*Le pauvre marquis,*" she exclaimed, "*peut il être imbecile à un tel point? que veut il que je fasse avec ce vilain singe?*" "But the diamond?" I observed. "*A la bonne heure,*" she replied, "*voilà du bon sens.*" The next personage worthy of notice was a young *diplomat* in person and manners, *tout à fait l'opposé de Monsieur le Marquis*. Not for a moment even would he have had the cruelty to deprive society of the sight of his *beaux traits*; his salutation was a demi-bow and a demi-courtesy, and this sinking and rising would no doubt have continued for some minutes had not the hat of *cet élégant par excellence* fallen from his delicate fingers; indeed, as he stooped to pick it up, I felt seriously alarmed for so fragile a being, for nothing but a miracle could have saved him from breaking in two. His attention was divided between the countess and the reflection of his own person in an opposite mirror. He talked of kings, princes, and ambassadors; sighed, looked pompous and sentimental by turns, and seemed to think that every lady in the room would have died even to obtain a glance from him. His offering to *la belle comtesse* was a musical box, which he termed a *bagatelle*: it being, however, set round with brilliants, the amiable hostess deigned to accept it.

These two extremes of the old and new *bon ton* amused me much; but neither of them gave me any idea of what I suppose to be real politeness. Indeed, as the countess herself observed, to form a gentleman, "*il faut la noblesse et la simplicité d'un*

*Anglais, avec la grace et l'élégance d'un François."* These, as far as my observation has enabled me to judge, are the characteristic qualities of that class of Creoles to which Monsieur P\*\*\*\*\* belongs. He unites in himself the manners of a courtier with the simplicity of a child—the spirit of a prince—the benevolence of a philanthropist, and the affability of one who considers wealth and station useful only in proportion as they are made to contribute to the happiness and gratification of others.

In the course of my visits to the residence of this hospitable gentleman, I had frequent opportunities to observe the treatment of slaves; and, without undertaking a vindication of the character of the planters, I may be at liberty to say, that experience and observation have convinced me that they have been most grossly misrepresented on this subject. I am not disposed to go so far as Mrs. Carmichael, in attributing to them a galaxy of virtues such as could only be found in the fabled Arcadia; but I am disposed to go as far as that lady in refuting the imputations of immorality and cruelty which have so frequently been brought against them. The treatment which the negroes receive on the estates of Monsieur P\*\*\*\*\* reflects the highest credit on the humanity of their master. To say that they are under-worked, and over-fed, and far happier than the labourers of Great Britain, would hardly convey a sufficiently clear notion of their actual condition. They put me much more in mind of a community of grown-up children, spoiled by too much kindness, than of a body of dependants, much less a company of slaves. I conversed with them at different times, and on every topic connected with their situation; and I not only found them extremely contented with their lot, but generally disposed to reject the boon of freedom, should it be offered them.

Well, but this is digressing. I started for the  
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battle-field of New-Orleans, and have loitered on my way, like a wayward boy who stops at every print-shop, kindly forgetful of his errand and those that wait for his return.

I do not know how it is, but, notwithstanding my transatlantic predilections, I never can think of the American War of Independence, or of those glorious deeds that have been performed since to preserve the country from foreign aggression, without a certain elevation of spirit, which it is impossible to account for. That propensity for boasting which is the besetting sin of all Americans, is then magnified into a virtue; and I could find it in my heart to sympathize with every ebullition of self-importance, from the absurdest symptoms of national pride and vaingloriousness down to Mr. Cooper's "Notions," from which we learn that Arcadia is to America what a row of pig-sties would be to a range of palaces: El Dorado a poor and miserable desert—Paradise itself a *kale-yard*. That America is to blot Britain out of the map, and dictate laws to such portions of Europe as it may think proper to suffer to remain above water. That Africa is to be made a hotbed to raise vegetables for the colder regions of this vast continent; while Asia is merely to be kept for a play-ground—a change of scene; and China to furnish oranges for the American children. Nay, I could almost go so far as to vouchsafe a nod of approbation to that shrewd and intelligent traveller, who, in his desire to rebuke the antique extravagance of his predecessors, regards the splendid little knot of Grecian Republics as nothing compared to the United States; laughs at the idea of their maritime combats in creeks and bays where a frigate could not manœuvre; considers the name of Homer a fiction; the tale of Troy divine, a joke, and rather a long one; who does not believe that Virgil was ever at sea in his life, looks upon Alex-

under the Great as a mere madman, and inclines to think that all that was accomplished at sea before Fulton set on his steam, had better be done over again. That Gibraltar is no more than a jail containing fifteen thousand prisoners, five thousand of whom wear a scarlet uniform; and is only remarkable for being the scene of a forgotten squabble between some American and British sailors; that Lord Byron swam across the Hellespont in the wrong place, and that the watery adventure was left to be achieved by an American Leander; that all moderns are wrong respecting the Turks, who are a much-abused people; and that the English are the propagators of all political falsehoods.

The first time I wended my steps towards the spot where the battle of New-Orleans was fought, I was alone, with no companion save my own thoughts—not always the best company in the world. I had, in fact, stolen a march upon my worthy host, who had threatened to accompany me, much against my wish, as I never could bear to have my musings interrupted when visiting a place which has either been hallowed by tradition or consecrated by song. I had taken care to provide myself with Goodwin's biography of General Jackson, which answered all the purposes of a guide. The first object that attracted my attention was the well-known Cypress Swamp, where General Jackson erected his famous breastwork, whence he raked the English troops so effectively on the fatal eighth of January. It is seldom that the annals of warfare have presented anything more gigantic in conception or bold in execution, than this stupendous scheme of defence; nor is it possible to contemplate, even at this distance of time, the wonderful activity, perseverance, and fortitude which the American general exhibited throughout, without being impressed with a profound sense of reverence for his genius and military skill. Much as I had heard of this celebrated bat-

tle, and the success which attended the American arms, I had never formed a just conception of the position which the American army occupied, nor of the raw materials of which it was formed. Bred up a soldier myself, and well acquainted with military tactics, I would rather have been the author of that defence than have planned the proudest battle ever won either by Wellington or Napoleon. What added greatly to the glory of General Jackson, was the superior number of the enemy—the well-known bravery of the British troops, and the intrepidity and experience of the gallant officers that commanded them. How vividly rose before my imagination, as I stepped silently along the banks of the Mississippi, the whole line of the British force, advancing with the utmost deliberation in solid columns, confident of success, and with their fascines and ladders, fully prepared to storm the American works. How well I could fancy the first discharge of artillery, which broke open the English lines, causing them to stagger and fall back in momentary confusion. Then the intrepid Packenham, making vigorous attempts to rally his dismayed soldiers, who, notwithstanding the terrible havoc made in their ranks, formed again, and again renewed the assault. Last of all, the flight of the enemy, who, unable to stand the continued blaze of destruction poured in upon them, and disheartened at the loss of almost all their general officers, retreated in dismay. The intervention of Providence was never more palpably displayed than in the results of this battle.

On my return home I felt melancholy and dejected: on the following day I received an offer from the management of the St. Charles to play one night previous to my departure for Vicksburg, which I accepted. I appeared in Othello, and to a much better house than I had yet played to in New-Orleans. Mr. Ranger had just concluded a very disastrous engagement, and Buckstone, the talented

dramatist and actor, did not draw at all; while the merry and versatile Mrs. Fitzwilliam, at the rival house, was carrying everything before her—filling the theatre to suffocation on every night of her performance, which was, no doubt, a source of great mortification to Mr. Caldwell, who had suffered that extraordinarily clever actress to slip through his fingers. It is doubtful, however, whether her career would have been as triumphant at the St. Charles as at the American.

Acting on Sunday, although loudly and justly denounced at all times as detrimental to the morals of the people, and inconsistent with a proper observance of the Sabbath, is a practice still adhered to by the managers of all the theatres in New-Orleans. The question is one of paramount importance, involving, as it does, the best interests of Christianity, the propagation of sound precepts, and the maintenance of a pure religious worship.

However unsuited a particular examination of this subject may be to these pages, I cannot forbear offering a few remarks; and I earnestly recommend to all who feel an interest in the matter to take it up, and follow it to some legitimate conclusion.

Religion, it is well known, was the parent of the modern as of the ancient drama throughout the world. In India as in Athens, the great religious festivals were the periods at which dramatic representations were exhibited. In modern Europe the clergy were the first actors, and the Bible was to the rude dramatists of the Dark Ages what Homer was to *Æschylus* and *Sophocles*. In all Christian countries the state of the general mind was then much the same, and the same fruits sprung up everywhere naturally and spontaneously out of the necessities of the times. The strong religious impulse which the Crusades had spread through the Christian world, or of which the Crusades themselves

were but the first visible outburst, the sacred enthusiasm which had seized all orders, sought out every possible means of awakening, of communicating, and of maintaining its contagious influence over the universal soul of man. The pious of the clergy hailed, with devout joy, the revival of the drama as a golden opportunity of propagating the saving doctrines of the cross; while the worldly regarded it as an instrument for more strongly riveting on the heart of man their spiritual influence. Every means, therefore, was adopted to farther the great end. The wiser knew by reflection—the more practical discovered by experience, that among barbarians, such as the mingled population of Europe had become, the imagination and the senses must be addressed rather than the reason. The mind of Europe was in a state of second childhood—of universal barbarism. The pure doctrines of Christianity might have been preached unheard; but the beautiful, the striking, the tender, the appalling facts of Scriptural history came home to the simplest understanding, and touched the rudest hearts when addressed to the sight as well as to the hearing.

I have merely made these remarks to show to what useful and rational purposes theatrical representations might be made to contribute; and how easy it were, in those countries where these Sunday entertainments are tolerated, to impart to them, on such occasions, a dash of religious interest—of sacred enthusiasm, which should at once yield healthful excitement to the imagination, valuable instruction to the mind, and, according to the old Grecian doctrine, purge and purify the heart by alternate terror and pity.

The government of Louisiana, I fear, have weightier sins to answer for than the toleration of theatrical exhibitions on Sunday; there are other places of public resort far more injurious to the morals of the community. These are open the whole year round;

and although generally recognised as the nurseries of infamy and licentiousness, yet they are openly countenanced by persons of respectability and influence. This is, indeed, the terrible plague-spot on the fair face of New-Orleans society. As I have not been niggard of my praises whenever I have found anything deserving of commendation, I am bound also to notice whatever strikes me as radically vicious or fundamentally wrong.

Every one knows how many noble faculties are stifled, how many good intentions rendered abortive, by the love of pleasure; how it degrades the dignity of man, shatters his energies, introduces hardness and selfishness into his heart; how it contracts and nullifies the being created for self-elevation, for love—created to be the cause of joy and of happiness to those belonging to him, and to humanity a subject of glory. This is a question well deserving of analyzation; it is one particularly entitled to the consideration of the city authorities of New-Orleans; for nowhere do the moral beauties of the human character become so early emasculated in the harems of vice as in that city—nowhere do we find the will of man less regulated, less submissive to duty and to privation. I speak now of the great body of the people, and without any reference to those classes among whom I found so much to admire, to envy, and to respect.

All my readers have no doubt heard of the famous "*Bals Masqués*" so much in vogue in the "Crescent City." Before visiting New-Orleans, I was under the impression that these "*Bals Masqués*" were a species of periodical festivals, in the style of those given in the building *De l'Académie Royale*, and *La Salle Favart*, at Paris. I was grievously mistaken. These *réunions* take place in New-Orleans every evening throughout the year, without even excepting those fatal periods when the yellow monster



lords it uncontrolled over the city. Of these, there are generally three every night, viz.: the "White Ball," the "Quadrone Society Ball," and the "Coloured Ball." With the exception of the Quadrone Ball, which is really a respectable affair, the others are of a very low character, being, in fact, mere places of rendezvous for all the gay females of the town. Few strangers, I believe, ever visit New-Orleans without attending; at least for once, these nocturnal haunts of libertinism, whatever may be their private opinion of their influence on society. On reaching the head of the staircase, you are somewhat unceremoniously accosted by a dare-devil-looking sort of individual, who, after feeling you all over, to ascertain that you have no concealed weapons about your person, politely insists upon seeing the interior of your hat, and, if satisfied on that point, condescendingly permits you to pass. These precautions, however, are not always sufficient to prevent the introduction of Arkansas toothpicks (as the Bowie-knife is facetiously designated) into the ballroom; and scarcely a night passes without exhibiting some scenes of violence, frequently ending in bloodshed. The performances at all the ballrooms are almost precisely the same, save that at one the women are white, and at the others coloured, varying in complexion from the slightest tinge of olive to the darkest shade of ebony. The greatest portion are clad in dominoes, while some are decked out in fantastic masquerade dresses. In point of *bonne tournure* and stylish deportment, the Ethiopian Magdalens have decidedly the advantage of the pale faces.

It is impossible to form a correct estimate of the disadvantages accruing to society from this regularly-organized system of demoralization and vice. Every clerk or scrivener who can muster up a few dollars, hurries to these unhallowed sanctuaries, and

launches unreservedly into every species of sensual indulgence; every flat-boatman or cattle-dealer, as soon as he has disposed of his merchandise, finds his way to these abodes of enchantment, and seldom thinks of returning home until he has paid a dear tribute to the Paphian shrine. Nor is it at all unusual to see members of the legislature mingling freely with these motley groups, graciously forgetful of their high station and dignified calling.

The consequences of this state of things to society are disastrous in the extreme: intellect is constantly kept in abeyance; literature is entirely neglected; science droops her head and languishes; while all places of rational amusement are becoming every day less and less frequented. I know that people are not fond of being disturbed in the comfortable arm-chair of those prejudices in which they have been *niched* so long; but it will be a proud day for New-Orleans when salutary restrictions shall be put upon these "*Bals Masqués*"—when the lawgivers of the state shall be induced to look with an eye of enlightened experience at the actual social condition of the city, and see what ameliorations are compatible with the institutions she now possesses. This can only be done by placing all ideas of amelioration and of progress under the protection of the religious sentiment; by rallying round the practical idea of advancement all the choicest spirits, and by combining a higher party, which desires the perfection of civilization, from all those inferior parties which know not what they desire.

The next great curse of New-Orleans is the prevalence of gambling-houses, and the passion of a certain class of the inhabitants for the faro-table. Every building where the "*Bals Masqués*" take place has within its precincts a den of this description; and this, with a great portion of people, forms the principal attraction of the evening.

Strange infatuation, that of gaming ! It is one of the few mysteries of our nature which I never could understand ! and yet, if the end be apparently base, the fervour is powerful, the audacity sublime, the sacrifices dreadful and unbounded. No gamester, for instance, can ever be inspired by woman. Gold is the stronger power of the two. The energy, devotedness, perseverance of the gamester, throw into deepest shade all the like passions of the lover, who is but a boy in comparison. How few men have we ever seen ready to sacrifice, for their mistress's sake, that inestimable treasure, that priceless jewel, that condition of our being, that life of our life—honour. The most devoted of lovers offers but his life—the gamester sacrifices his honour, and lives on.

The gamester is a Stoic, a Roman hero, a martyr : he is calm amid his triumphs, unyielding when he falls. He rises to the highest and falls to the lowest station in a few hours, and remains firm, immovable, unaltered. There, without leaving the very table where his demon rivets him, body and soul, he runs through all the vicissitudes of life, and submits to all the chances of Fortune, good or ill. By turns a beggar and a king, he plunges at once from the highest to the lowest grade of social life, ever self-possessed, ever calm, ever sustained by his ambition, ever stimulated on by the unquenchable thirst which devours him.

What will he be in another moment ? a prince ? a slave ? How will he leave the gaming-table ? a naked wretch ? or a millionaire, bending under the weight of his gold ?—he is indifferent. To-morrow he will come again, to lose a fortune or to double it.

One thing to him is impossible, and that is repose. He is as the sea-bird, delighting in the tumult of the hurricane and the roar of the boiling billows. You say he loves gold ? No : he throws away

eagles by thousands : those hellish gifts cannot satisfy or quench his thirst. Possessed of riches, he pants after poverty, that he may once again feel that terrible emotion, without which life has no relish for him.

What is the value of gold to the gamester ? Less than grains of sand to others. But he sees in it a symbol of the good and evil which he loves to struggle with and to defy. Gold is his plaything, his paramour, his friend, his dream, his poetry. It is the shadow which he constantly pursues, fights, grapples with, to conquer it, and then to quit his grasp, that he may begin again the horrid battle with destiny. Oh ! it is great—it is beautiful—though absurd ! it is sublime !

## CHAPTER XVI.

Departure for Vicksburg.—Steamer Sultana.—Dreadful State of the Weather.—Bulwer's Play of "Money."—Writing for Amusement.—James's Failure in Dramatic Composition.—Bulwer's Success.—Character of Bulwer's Plays.—Pleasure of Digression.—Company on board the "Sultana."—Travelling Gamblers.—Horrible State of Vicksburg.—Decline Playing.—Natchez, and its social and intellectual Resources.—An Essay on small Towns.—Return to New-Orleans.—A Duel, and Duelling in general.—Remarks on the Duties of Government.—The Code of Honour in Europe.—Its salutary Effects on Society.—State of Public Opinion in New-York.—Grievances of the Law.—Lawyers and Harpies.—Love of Scandal.—The Press, and its Abuses.—A few Words on Human Inconsistencies.

On the morning of the 5th of February I started for Vicksburg: there was a drizzling rain falling at the time, which rendered the passage through extremely disagreeable, and prevented me from remaining on the deck of the "Sultana" (the most magnificent steamboat on the Mississippi waters),

to gratify that intense curiosity—which I naturally felt in gliding, for the first time, through that fertile valley about which Mr. Timothy Flint has said so many wild and beautiful things. Still, however, as this was no season to look out for verdant meadows, the shade of woods, or the expected song of birds, I resigned myself, in the most submissive spirit, to the heated atmosphere of the cabin, where, having nothing else to do, I amused myself by summing up the merits of “Money”—not the filthy compound of that name which is used in settling debts of honour and washerwomen’s bills, but Bulwer’s play, which is really a production of very superior merit, though occasionally disfigured by affectations of style and incoherencies of language.

There are many persons, gifted, apparently, with reason and common sense in all that concerns the general business of life, and capable both of talking and writing in a rational and even a superior manner, whose faculties seem to leave them the instant they attempt to write a play. Take, for instance, those no-doubt-worthy-and-perhaps-in-many-other-things-though-certainly-not-in-literary-composition-clever persons who write “for amusement!” How much patience, labour, industry, which might have been made to flow into more congenial channels, is yearly expended by this misguided class! Ask Mr. Forrest—inquire of Mr. Macready—let Mr. Vandenhoff inform you; or, if the reader pleases, he may even demand of so humble an individual as myself: and lo! what amusing stories might be told of five-act tragedies, presenting nothing but one vast expanse of dreariness and desolation—of oceans of blank verse, without the remotest semblance of a thought or an idea!

This writing for amusement, by-the-by, is a very important question; and, between ourselves (that is, between myself and the little canine gravity cozily

curled on the rug before the fire), it is all Fudge ! I would ask the reader, in plain sincerity, whether he ever heard of bumpkins hedging and ditching for amusement. Why, it is less labour ! The truth is, when people flatter themselves that they are writing for amusement, they are writing for fame or profit, but have a trembling distrust that they will get neither one nor the other, and do not like the mortification of missing their aim altogether ; so, by way of backing out in case of a failure, and saving themselves the mortification of an utter disappointment, they pretend that they are writing for amusement. Out with such nonsense ! there are fifty ways of amusing themselves, far less troublesome and laborious than writing books. The critic always feels it as an indignity offered to him when any author brazenly puts forth in the preface that his book has been written for amusement.

Every man is undoubtedly privileged to write for his amusement ; and if, when he has written, he locks his manuscript carefully up, or gives it next morning to his servant to light his fire withal, he certainly does write for his amusement, and no one has a right to find fault with him. But how can a man who causes his lucubrations to be printed, and published, and advertised, and thrust before the public eye, be said to be writing for his own amusement ? Is he not palpably and obviously writing for the amusement or instruction of the public ? For, would it not be a prodigious and gross absurdity to publish that which he knew or believed to be incapable of communicating either amusement or instruction ? Yet stay ; I see now how the matter stands. Some persons are very fond of fun : idle boys will sometimes tie a tin kettle to a dog's tail, or an old woman's apple-stall to the wheel of a hackney-coach, and many persons think that there is no amusement or fun where there is no mischief.

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On this principle it must be that so many persons write for their amusement. They enjoy nothing more than hoaxing the public with a parcel of print that is not worth reading. There is no better fun to them than putting out a book with a taking title, getting it reviewed by some good-natured friend, seeing it stuck up in shop windows, and then laughing at the critics when they fall asleep over it, or make wry faces at it, or, in a passion, throw it into the fire. Truly it is a capital joke when, by means of a sly paragraph in a newspaper, persons are induced to give a dollar and a half for a book which the author is conscious is not worth a farthing; it is like giving a monkey a marble to crack instead of a nut—which, by-the-way, is a dangerous experiment, unless you get out of the monkey's way before he lifts the marble to his mouth. This is certainly writing for one's own amusement, and capital fun it must be—as good as greasing one's grandmother's spectacles. This is, no doubt, the solution of what is otherwise so difficult to be explained, viz. : that so many authors should persist in publishing books which nobody can read, but which many persons are tempted to *try* to read. I once knew a young lady, who, being fond of fun, filled the sugar-basin with lumps of alabaster imitating loaf-sugar, and very highly was she amused when the good people attempted, all in vain, to dissolve in their tea-cups this stubborn mockery of sweetness. Now I can easily imagine that such a one would write a book for her own amusement: and if she could but get it copiously advertised and nicely reviewed, so that it should fall at once into many hands before any intimation of the hoax could get abroad, it would be a capital joke; and if rebuked for her sin, she could say that she only wrote for her own amusement. But persons who write for their own amusement ought to be compelled to read their own books;

just as some ignorant pretenders to medicine have been sometimes compelled by their indignant patients to swallow their own drugs.

This must, doubtless, be the true solution of the otherwise strange fact, that so many books are published which nobody can read. There is, however, nothing analogous to it in other trades. A shoemaker, for instance, makes shoes of all sizes; but the largest which he makes are not too large for some feet, and the smallest are not too small for others: he makes his shoes to be worn by his customers. It would be a startling novelty, if, when a pair of shoes were sent home and paid for, and found not to fit, the shoemaker should, upon remonstrance, reply, "Why, bless you, sir (or madam), what do I care about the shoes fitting? if you cannot wear them on your feet, wear them on your head. I did not make them for you to wear: I made them for my own amusement." Or, let us suppose another case: An omnibus is standing at the corner of Wall-street, with the word "Greenwich" written on the outside, and the coachman brandishes his whip at one end, and the cad lifts up his hand and his voice at the other end, and by means of these two preliminary puffs the omnibus gets filled with passengers, and then away goes the concern to the Bowery. There are oaths enough, of course, when the passengers get out and find themselves bit—and what says the driver in answer to their expostulations and reproofs? "What's Greenwich to me, or I to Greenwich? I drive the omnibus for my own amusement!" Now, would not this conduct be thought rather too bad? A man, no doubt, has a right to drive omnibuses for his own amusement, but then he ought not to say "Greenwich" when he means "Bowery;" nor ought he to take money of those to whom he gives not money's worth. But this is a case which never hap-



pens ; it is only they who write for amusement that disappoint and hoax their customers, and so have all the fun to themselves ; and that it is a common trick, is proved by the vast number of books put forth which are totally devoid of all power either to please or instruct the world.

The critic will, I trust, forgive me for trespassing upon his province with these few words of general application—the general reader, I fear, will scarcely be so charitable. “What,” I hear him exclaim, “has all this to do with Sir Edward Bulwer’s ‘Money?’ That gentleman, surely, is the last person to write for amusement, or to put forth worthless books!” All this may be very true: but then these occasional digressions suit my peculiar humour. They are to me what the sight of a green plant, or a noisy rill, leaping over its bed of pebbles, would have been to him who travelled from Dan to Beersheba and found all barren. And pray, gentle reader, since you want to know everything—what this has to do with that—how did Miss Biffin, let me ask you, manage to wipe her nose, being, as you know full well she was, minus her “pickers and stealers?”

When I said that many persons, otherwise endowed with good sense, lose it altogether when they attempt to write a play, I meant to embrace in that denunciation even some of the most brilliant writers of the day. James, notwithstanding his excellent taste—his complete mastery over expression—his extensive knowledge of human nature—his ready eye for the picturesque, and his deep and impressive sympathy with whatever is high-souled and noble, not only failed in dramatic composition, but placed in immediate jeopardy a reputation with which he has no right to trifle. It has not been so, however, with Bulwer. Like Sir Walter Scott, he has run “through every mode of the lyre,” and has

proved himself "master of all." His "Richelieu" and his "Lady of Lyons" place him at once at the head of the *acting* drama. In these plays there is uncommon breadth and massive vigour; great variety of situation and character; a vehement and nervous eloquence, and everywhere a strong, un-studied force of language, such as the stage demands. "Money" is a composition of a different character altogether. In this we find more of the drawbacks and weaknesses which are peculiar to Bulwer, than in any other of his dramas. The materials out of which the edifice has been constructed are not all of a kind; but he mingles polished marble with scabbed sandstone; and, while we are struck with the fine views which he takes of civil policy and social life, we are also made to feel the presence of something jarring and unwelcome. Still it is a noble play: during its representation we are not only moved and agitated, but we come away from the theatre with an accession of knowledge.

It is now time that I should say something of the company on board the "Sultana;" not that I have any wish to follow in the footsteps of those amiable travellers, who, in picking up the gleanings of a rich harvest which others have reaped before them, describe whatever they see as minutely as if they were either walking on *terra incognita*, or that such was supposed to be the fascination of their pens, that they could make familiar things charm the reader by the magic of their descriptions, but that there was, in truth, something about these people *deserving* of a passing remark.

I had hardly been five minutes on board, when I perceived sundry strange characters prowling about the boat, and staring everybody out of countenance, as if they wished to worm out the heart of some mystery. They were mostly dressed with a

degree of neatness bordering upon elegance, and, but for a somewhat gawkish display of watch-chains and diamonds, you might almost have mistaken them for gentlemen. Thus passed several hours; and while the rest of the company were absorbed in different occupations, such as munching apples, eating peanuts, snoring, reading, or paring their nails—these persons carried on their system of observation with a business-like tact, which could not but attract the attention of one unused to such scenes. A gentleman present, whom I soon recognised as an old acquaintance, gave me all the information I desired on the subject. From him I learned that these men were gamblers—more technically speaking, blacklegs and robbers; that their occupation in life was to travel up and down the Mississippi, preying upon the unwary, and plundering whoever came within their reach. What had struck me with so much astonishment in relation to their conduct, was nothing but an every-day occurrence—a part and portion of their system after getting on board—the task of sorting the “*flats*” from the “*sharps*.” The classification under which I fell was certainly not very flattering to my vanity; for I was among the very first whom one of these knights of the black ace condescendingly honoured with an invitation to play a game at whist, or to partake in a little bit of brag, if that was more agreeable. In declining so polite an offer, I must have looked as if I had meant to say “*No you don’t!*” for he tipped me a sly wink in return, as if he intended thereby to congratulate me upon my knowledge of the world. I only wish I had been able to impart some of that knowledge to several of my fellow-passengers, and there would have been less swearing, money-losing, hope-blasting, heart-breaking, and considerable more tranquillity on board during the remainder of the passage.

On my arrival at Vicksburg, I found the streets absolutely choked with mud. It would be difficult to convey an idea of the state of the town: it would seem as if the place had been for forty years under water, and was but just undergoing the process of resuscitation. There was not a creature to be seen loitering about; all was still and quiet, as if the inhabitants were afraid yet to trust the solidity of the ground. Trade was at a stand-still; the market-place was deserted; nor was there the least likelihood of amelioration for many days to come. Under these circumstances—convinced that my appearance at the theatre could neither be profitable to the manager nor advantageous to myself—I left again the next morning, without even reporting myself at headquarters or apprizing any one of my arrival. I trust that when I next present myself in that town the elements will treat me with more urbanity and good-will.

I stopped for one day at Natchez: this city was in the same predicament as Vicksburg; its thoroughfares and public places were equally forlorn. I had some excellent letters of introduction to some of the principal families in the place, but as I had no idea of prolonging my stay at present, I did not think it worth while to deliver them. There is a college in the neighbourhood of considerable importance, conducted on a very enlightened plan, and where literature is said to flourish in an eminent degree; but the unfavourable state of the weather presented an insurmountable barrier to my original intention of visiting it. In Natchez, I am informed, the arts of refinement have attained great perfection; and a superior order of intelligence is the characteristic of its best society. Notwithstanding the almost impenetrable mist which darkened the atmosphere, I saw enough of the city to form very favourable impressions. There is one feature in the character

of its inhabitants which is peculiar, and highly *interesting*. They hate the natives of New-Orleans with a furious zeal, scarcely conceivable by those who have never heard them express themselves on the subject. In this respect Natchez resembles many small towns I could name in England; and as this is the only instance of a laudable spirit of antipathy between large and small towns I have yet met with in the United States; and as it may, moreover, be expedient to cherish and encourage these aversions, by showing how the same charitable feelings are fostered and propagated elsewhere, I will endeavour to point out how the thing is done in England.

Dwellers in great towns, on the other side of the Atlantic, the inhabitants of leviathan piles of brick and mortar, are always apt to be supercilious towards the claims of such as are small, genteel, busy — yet with no business; in fact, there is a graduated scale of contempt and reverence on the part of towns for one another. The “City,” magnificent in its possession of cathedral, close borough, and clergy—its county associations—its freedom from trade—its unimpeachable rubbers and unutterable exclusiveness, takes the lead in self-estimation. I am dubious whether a cathedral city does not secretly despise London: *the* palace, *the* bishop, *the* dean are grand units, forming a unity of grandeur, that streets of palaces, a whole house of lords, and an entire cabinet of right honourables can hardly compare with. In London, there is too much *diffusion* of dignity to be agreeable to those accustomed to its *concentration*. Every place has its notion of what is select; but the selectness of all selectness is, by general consent, reserved for the “city,” cold as its monuments and stupid as its streets. There was once a public ball given at Canterbury, and there ensued a muster of eight couples: a young officer

remarked on the scanty attendance, and was comforted by the dean's lady assuring him it was "particularly select."

The tradespeople in a city are of a different order from their fellows elsewhere: dependant on their own resident gentry, they too imbibe notions of gentility — of the gentility of serving the genteel — they are refractions of their betters. The horror entertained of immense manufacturing towns by a city is Brahminical; and the contempt with which the manufacturing town returns the compliment is at least Mohammedan. The one feels that the hundred thousand inhabitants could not produce a single genealogical tree, the other knows it could put the possessions of the entire city in a corner of its pocket-book; the one talks of "our ancestors," the other of "ourselves;" the one dilates upon order, the other upon energy; the one is a deep serene, interrupted only by a dinner-party, the races, a clerical appointment, or a county marriage—the other is an ever-changing ocean of loss, gain, hope, enterprise, and vicissitude; the one appeals with pride to its quiet, the other, with equal pride, to its bustle; the one inlays, the other overlays; the one is aristocratic in stone, the other, the *tiers état*, in gold.

The small town that ranks next in assumption is the county town: its castle is its cathedral, its assizes and judges are its close and bishop. Being generally without manufactures, there is a point of resemblance in its claims to distinction; but the distinction is of a lower grade—it is professional—does not aspire to aristocracy; and while invariably divided into two sets, "flutters its Volscians" on a more miscellaneous scale. Your small county town is an arrant little flirt and gossip—is outrageously gay on a Lilliputian scale during the winter, and absolutely alive during the assizes. It

often abounds in beauty—has a complement of nine resident young beaux and seven superannuated old ones—supports a creditable number of ancient ladies, who take upon themselves the support of a respectable portion of that article known everywhere, news figured with scandal—maintains three day and boarding schools in elegant opposition to affluence—adopts every new set of quadrilles six months after publication—sends a joint-stock milliner to Paris, and averages two genteel marriages a year. Your county town does not scorn a manufacturing district with the superb scorn of the city: it dares not, seeing that such district is often a convenient mart for its supernumerary young men and maidens—one in the way of business or profession, the other in the way of marriage.

Next in the scale comes the creditable market town, which varies in manners and pretensions as its nearest neighbour is a city, or a county or commercial town. If near the great commercial town, it is less genteel, but more intelligent, from the greater facility of communicating with the world at large. Knowledge, and the means of acquiring knowledge, lie nearer home—wealth and enterprise have brought them there. Your large market town is, perhaps, most like a county one on a small scale; probably feuds run higher, and the talk and proceedings of the Senate are more strictly egotistic. There is generally among the inhabitants a greater and a lesser light, to rule the movements and fill the urns of the stars in and around the market-place.

To speak, lastly, of the very small market town, in a neighbourhood where towns of any description are few in number and scant in size. I boldly avow this kind of town to be my favourite among the children of brick and stone—the most enduring of all the race. If in a beautiful country, the neighbourhood is sure to abound with resident families, and

the line of separation between landowners and townspeople is probably drawn less strictly; there are connecting links and charities, some arising from vicinity, some from similarity of taste, some from business, and some from benevolence. The pretensions of such a place are innocently ludicrous, and much may be forgiven on the score of situation. It has its one general store: a shop of that kind where everything is to be sold, and where the precise article you want is never to be bought; it is a brook composed of a thousand dribbling rills; it is the duplicate of a duplicate—the fitted-up by travellers of all denominations—the fragmentary arrangement of fragments. Yet are the inhabitants very proud of this one shop, and boldly avouch the truth of its board: "All kinds of mercery, hosiery, and haberdashery sold here." Alas! an appeal for a yard of black silk would be met by a negative—and yet the shop undertakes to furnish funerals. The hamlets and villages in the neighbourhood have a reverential feeling towards this tiny town, which now, when so little is revered, gladdens the passenger's spirit, making him cheerfully consent to go without gloves to the next stage, having carelessly lost his travelling pair by the way.

Other claims hath the place: a market-cross, built by a burgess when the town was corporate; an ancient archway, that once led to a house where one of the Edwards slept; a fine old monument with an effaced epitaph; and a Crusader cut in stone, magnificent to look upon, notwithstanding the loss of his nose: also, there is an inn famous for its veal cutlets, and the recollection that once it furnished ball-suppers. With respect to the inhabitants, here flourish those whom Miss Austen has forever immortalized true as truth: clergymen's widows and daughters, among whom there is generally the family likeness of kindly hearts, small means, lady-



like habits ; just that class who occupy the niche between dependance and independence ; whom any one may visit, and every one possessing feeling is kind to ; the gentlest of gossips—the soonest pleased of visitors—the most grateful of persons obliged.

In addition, there is the usual harvest of doctors and lawyers, and of doctors' and lawyers' wives, sons, and daughters, together with a few nondescripts in the condition of "well to do" and doing nothing, and a few other nondescripts who are rising in the world, and whose notions are rising too : men who set up gigs, and whose wives create heart-burnings by emphatically smart gowns, and more airs than their compeers consider graces. Conversation and amusement in such a place are at least innocent, and occasional contact with neighbours of more enlarged mind and means gives, if the said neighbours are tolerably benevolent, a fillip of improvement to what might otherwise stagnate into vacuity, or foam into ill-nature. A loan of books and music—an importation of newspapers and anecdotes—a present of fruits and flowers—an invitation to tea—a remembrance while on a distant tour—a willing ear lent to consultations touching the welfare of the little library : truly, it is worth something to live near a town of this kind, were it only to discover how many cheap and easy methods there are of giving pleasure.

The engrossing topic of conversation in New-Orleans, when I reached the city, was a duel which had just been fought between two Creoles, terminating in the death of one of the parties. The individual who fell in the affair was one of those noxious weeds that will sometimes spring up in the bosom of the best-regulated societies, and vegetate there for a season in spite of public opinion and general execration. He was the best swordsman in Louisiana, but in proportion to his excellence in

the art of fencing there had grown in him an arrogance of manner and a disposition to quarrelsomeness which were extremely offensive to those with whom he happened to associate. Six of the most promising young men of the city had already fallen in single combat with this desperado, and such was the universal dread of the weapon which he wielded with such fatal dexterity, that it was considered absolute temerity either to notice his vaunting tirades or to resent his outrages. At last it was his ill fortune to pick a quarrel with a gentleman who, with great promptness of mind, punished him on the spot, thus rendering it necessary for the blood-stained bravo to become the challenger, in which case the choice of weapons fell to his antagonist. They fought with pistols: the bully yielded his misspent life on the very first fire. There was but one opinion expressed throughout the community: everybody rejoiced at the removal of so dangerous a member of society; not a solitary voice was raised in behalf of the dead; not a single note of lamentation mingled with his obsequies or pealed over his grave.

Let not the reader suppose that such characters abound in New-Orleans; or that scenes like these are of frequent occurrence, for it is not so. This was the only hostile encounter of the kind that took place in Louisiana in the course of the winter. It was a solitary instance of the evil results that may sometimes grow out of the code of honour: let us see what good it has been accessory to—what mischief it is calculated to prevent.

In a country where so many are ready to raise the hue and cry against the practice of duelling, and the newspaper press is so continually teeming with bitter denunciations against the code of honour, as a remnant of barbarism, a thing to be scouted and abolished, any isolated attempt to promulgate doc-

trines and opinions at variance with those set up and advocated by these concentrated essences of wisdom, might appear somewhat Quixotic, if not altogether out of place; nor is it my intention to undertake so hopeless a task. I find the opportunity favourable, however, for making a few remarks on the subject, the result of much observation on the different institutions of various climes and countries, and my opinions will be stated in a spirit which has nothing for its object but a desire to challenge sober investigation and to promote social good.

It will not be denied that it is the first duty of every government to consult the welfare of society both in a moral and religious point of view. As morals constitute the essence of religion, so are social duties the foundation of government. Liberty implies the protection of life and property, without which liberty is but a phantom: law implies the protection of character, without which the law is but a mockery. Now if any one can inform me by what metaphysical process this last blessing can be secured in the Northern States, under existing institutions, and their fine preventive-laws against duelling, I shall be eternally thankful.

I shall not speak of the wisdom of past generations, as that would be attributing to youth the experience of age, and conferring the honour of gray hairs on the cradle. But where shall we find any state of society where scandal, idle gossip, and rancorous defamation are less tolerated than in those countries where men are held responsible by the laws of honour for everything they do or say in violation of the decencies of life? It is true that in the Northern States of Europe duelling has been proscribed under the most severe penalties; but, then, courts of equity have been instituted, which have shed the most beneficial influences on society. These have proved a most efficient check on the

propensity of man to slander and vilify his fellow-man. In England and in France, the comprehensive spirit of the age still recognises the necessity of personal responsibility by duel; and although the law affects to condemn the practice, no body of jurymen has ever yet been found to affix a stigma upon the man who manfully stood forth in defence of his honour or that of his family, when these were wantonly assailed. But how seldom does a case occur in those countries requiring the intervention of the code of honour! The fact is, that the very existence and toleration of such a code, so far from unhinging the wheels of the social system, begets cautiousness of speech and moderation in everything. Persons who might otherwise have felt disposed to indulge in personal animosities or acerbity of remark, are thus materially held in check. Throughout the South, especially, I have generally found that men are not only studious to avoid giving offence, but to reciprocate towards one another all those little urbanities and deferences which are the great charm of civilized life. Such will always be the effects of the code of honour with a chivalrous and high-minded people. It preserves a healthful tone of feeling everywhere; it calls for the exercise of charity, and teaches everybody forbearance and good-will. It is a singular fact, that, during my whole residence in the Southern States, I never once heard a solitary ill-natured allusion to the detriment of any human being.

Let us now turn to a very different picture. It has been the pleasure of the Legislature of New-York to pass a very severe law against duelling—so much so, indeed, that the mere act of sending or accepting a challenge is construed into a crime: and what has that wise body done to compensate society for depriving it of the only safe-guard against the inroads of those depredators that prey upon its most vital parts? What facilities have they given

to protect the domestic hearth from those scorpions that poison and destroy the harmonies of private life? None. Oh yes, there is the law: you can prosecute and recover damages. "Damn the damages!" says Sensible Spanker to lawyer Meddle; "I want my wife:" and where is the man, with a button's worth of spirit, that would not prefer the inviolability of his character to coining money out of that wretched crucible—a civil prosecution? Besides, this suing for defamation is the vilest farce that ever was enacted, unless, indeed, the aggrieved person be in affluent circumstances; in which case he need give himself no trouble about his character: it is only the poor and the unfortunate who stand in any immediate danger of that bugbear.

All the world knows how difficult it is for the poor to contend against the rich in matters of law. The expenses, heart-burnings, delays, and bitter vexations which must be encountered before a case of slander can fairly come to trial, are inconceivably great. When it is the object of the oppressor to scare the victim of malevolence from the field of contest, he sends at once a handsome retainer to some of those special pleaders whose only tact consists in making the worse appear the better reason; whose reputation is founded in the recklessness of spirit and savage brutality they are wont to display in the art of cross-examination. Hemmed in as the bar of New-York is with men of profound learning and gigantic intellect, it is a pity that it should be disgraced by so many pretenders to knowledge—mere harpies, who substitute forensic chicanery and impudence for genuine sagacity and skill: and yet these wretches will thrive and fatten where men of superior abilities and uncompromising integrity can scarcely get a brief.

I am personally acquainted with an individual who was once deterred from bringing a case to

trial, because he was informed that certain questions would be put to one of his principal witnesses, which, although irrelevant to the matter at issue, could not fail to prove extremely painful and unpalatable. Hundreds of similar cases occur throughout the year without attracting particular attention, except among those who are immediately interested. Aware that even their best qualities will be turned against them, and made the instruments for wounding them in the most vulnerable parts, persons of sensitive feelings shrink from the detestable ordeal with horror and dismay, until, ashamed of betraying their susceptibility, they often affect a callousness to the world's opinion which they are far from possessing; and while they deceive others, nourish, in secret, feelings that prey on their own hearts. This is by many called philosophy! Solemn mockery! Such philosophy is only another word for that lingering, silent, devoted sacrifice of the heart, in which hope, and happiness, and life perish most miserably.

These are the beauties of the social system in the State of New-York. The consequences to the community are dreadful and appalling in the extreme. The sanctuaries of private life are constantly violated with impunity; individuals of retired habits and inoffensive character are every day dragged before the public, and their circumstances exposed to the indecent gaze of an unsympathizing multitude; scandal and defamation are the staple amusements deemed most worthy of pursuit; and, to such an excess has depravity of taste been carried, that no publication, however well conducted in other respects, can hope to thrive, unless its columns be seasoned with spicy personalities and enlivened with vituperative abuse. This is not an overdrawn picture. When the New-York Herald was driven, by some unaccountable compunctious visitings, to

alter its tone of conduct, and to adopt a style of remark at once commendable and judicious, its circulation in the city fell off fifty per cent. What a terrible comment on the morals of the Empire State ! What a fearful illustration of the manners and customs of the inhabitants of Gotham !

And who or what have hitherto been the most strenuous advocates against duelling ? From whence have the thunderbolts of rabid denunciation against the code of honour been most frequently hurled ? From the seat of all earthly abominations—from those who have pandered to every imaginable vice that can degrade a community ! From dastardly wretches, who, having drained the bowl of infamy, and outraged society by the commission of the grossest and most disgusting misdemeanours, are naturally anxious to secure for themselves a perpetual immunity from responsibility.

Like every other great power in human affairs, the press becomes an instrument of virtue or of vice, according to the character of the person to whom it is intrusted. Like the AMRECTA cup in KEHAMA, it confers an immortality of bliss or of agony, as it is taken by a virtuous or a corrupt spirit. In no country or city has the public press been so much defiled by impure sheets as in New-York : nowhere do we see so many infamous attempts to break down the barriers of restraint, or efforts to parade the blandishments of vice under the specious semblance of wholesome exposure. Without multiplying instances, it is only necessary to mention the case of a notoriously bad woman, steeped in crime and infamy, who has repeatedly stepped forward in the capacity of patroness, and employed the very wealth she had wrung from the victims of her nefarious practices, to lash every individual who, in the exercise of his functions, had either balked her career or exposed her atrocities. The number of deleteri-

ous sheets that have been, from time to time, placed under the control of this profligate woman, is almost incredible! The individuals who have been hired for the onslaught on private character and useful institutions, have always been the loudest declaimers against the sinful practice of duelling!!

The most amusing circumstance connected with this anti-duelling spirit is, that those who so clamorously disapprove of the practice are always the first to condemn the individual who has acted up to the letter of the law. In the same breath they will proscribe the man who steps forward in defence of his wounded honour, and banish forever from society the hapless wretch who lacks nerve and spirit to resent an insult. Beautiful contradictions! amiable eccentricities!! Well; but what is life but a jumble of paradoxes?—what are the conventional forms of society but a bundle of inconsistencies?

The "Friend" who remains true to her poke bonnet and plaid gown (there was a time when a black hood and a green apron were the orthodox dress), thinks it not wrong to sell gaudy silks, and ribands of every colour of the rainbow, to her gayer sisters of the *world*. Those who shrink with pain from the pleasures afforded by the ear, and consider music as a snare, cannot think that offence comes by the eye, and allow their children to be taught drawing; those who look with positive displeasure upon dancing as an exercise, will permit their maidens to be drilled, and that by a military man, while they consider the existence of an army as a leprosy upon the face of the country, and are bound, according to their own principle, to extend no favour nor countenance, directly or indirectly, to any who may belong to it.

I mention these facts neither reproachfully nor in derision, but merely as an illustration of the self-delusion into which the most conscientious may fall.



## CHAPTER XVII.

The Carnival in New-Orleans.—Compared with the Carnival in Rome.—Carnival Scenes in both Countries.—Principal Feature of the New-Orleans Carnival.—The Bedouin Arabs.—Exciting Appearance of New-Orleans on the last Day of the Carnival.—View of the St. Charles Hotel.—*Bal Costumé* at the St. Louis Exchange.—*Soirées* and the Dancing Mania.—“*Bals de Société*.”—An Imitation of Almack’s.—Exclusiveness of the “*Bals de Société*.”—Public Indignation thereat.—Amusing Movements in consequence.—Style of Dressing among Men of different Nations.—A few Words on the Art of Dressing, and the Effects of good Dressing on the Mind.

AT the prolific season of the New-Orleans year, now arrived, when, whatever may be the dangers of foreign war, the distractions of politicians, the fall or rise of funds, the proceedings of the Legislature, the arrangements for coming elections, the calamities of theatres, dreadful accidents to individuals, and all the other moving concerns of life, there is still a great number of persons who go about to kill time and be amused, regardless, beyond the gossip minute, of what happens to any but themselves—at this season, I consider it incumbent on me to tell the reader what strange sights are to be seen in a city heaving with animation, curiosity, and the impatient and paramount desire to be pleased and to please others—the last day of Carnival is at hand.

The Carnival in New-Orleans presents the usual variety of black, blue, and yellow—red, green, and gray; the same mixture of folly and extravagance, of grotesque and arabesque—of fantastic and non-descript, that is to be seen in all Roman Catholic countries, where this glorious epoch of the year is held inviolable by the attacks of care or the en-

croachments of grief. I was, however, disappointed with the general results : and had I not seen the Carnival in Rome, I should have entertained but a kind of undertaker's idea of what a Carnival ought to be. The last days of Carnival in the Crescent City struck me as the *funeral of folly*, while the same celebration at Rome seems to be the *very triumph* of it. His holiness, good papa as he is, generally gives in to it *con amore*. Were he to persist in obliging his children to play all-fools with moderation, it is more than probable that they would turn march-of-intellect people before he could whistle a semiquaver. I well remember how savage they were on one occasion at not being allowed to make themselves sufficiently ridiculous. But, generally speaking, they have a plenary bull of permission—and, *per Bacco* ! they are far from letting it lie a dead letter. All notions of civil and ecclesiastical reform are nipped by this indulgence ; liberalism is bid to go to Malamocco ; while all the best-humoured cutthroats in the world are at old Mother Hornie's service. To be sure, there is always at Rome *indulgenza plenaria* for worse than simple buffoonery ; every church-door advertises it : but on these occasions there is always a *loose* of paternal benevolence—a *licenza*. Masks, dominoes, fancy and stage dresses, national costumes, characters of all kinds, imitated from anything between a priest and a naked Cyprian (these are sacred) ; nay, characters of no kind—nondescripts ; clowns without a jest, leaden-heeled Harlequins, and Columbines ready for every Pantaloon that leers at them ; in fine, *confetti*, *mocali*, and a pony *gallopade* each day, keep Rome at the crowing point of exultation for a week—"Mighty Rome ! Mistress of the World ! Mother of the Fine Arts !" etc., etc.

Nothing is strange in such a confusion, but a rational creature. Here stands a bear whispering

soft nonsense into a lady's bonnet; there, a German, with whiskers brought over his back like pigs' tails, dishevelled mane, and ravening teeth, unconsciously looking the *ogre*. This carriage is driven by a fat cook-maid—that mounted with three powdered baboons by way of footmen; another filled with half a dozen Grand Turks, or Indian squaws. Now a senator drives up in his gilt coach, as big with the majesty of his station as if he had swallowed a Board of Aldermen: now six whole troopers ride down at full trot, fire in their eyes and flaming swords in their hands, to announce, as they gallantly clear the streets, that the ponies may canter to the Capitol. A park of two great guns proclaims the victor and awes the populace. "Mighty Rome!" *ancora!* huzza! The Corso looks, for all the world, like the ward of mad millers in the moon, hustling about, through clouds of meal-dust, to the tune of visionary millstones. Many of the English become quite Romans on this occasion, and dispense to you their comfits (of the best *quicklime*) as the *restaurateurs* do their *pains, à discretion*—in other words, *sans discretion*. I once saw a young lady so behailed with them as to throw her into the prettiest confusion and distress imaginable; while some English beauties, instead of taking the like occasion to be elegantly embarrassed, primmed up and pouted at every shower of *confetti*, looking as stiff and frosty-faced as so many garden-goddesses in a hailstorm. On the other hand, when these snowy Florimels do melt, it is with a waste-pipe; the little *Tartuffes* become positive tomboys. Prudery is, in fact, but a desperate sort of prudence, afraid to trust itself, and which, restraint once taken off, runs as wild a rig as Mad Bess without her strait-waistcoat.

But, when all is said and done, to see the Carnival in perfection, you must see it in a London print-

shop ; the thing itself is low, squalid, and uproarously dull : stable-boys and loose women are the chief masqueraders. Imagine the populace of St. Giles's buying their fancy dresses at Rag Fair, and tumbling draggletail, heighho for O'Connel through the Strand—little better than this. You will have more wit, and not half the noise about it, at Bartholomew Fair in half an hour, than at Rome in a whole Carnival ; though the Romans are said to be quick at satire, as is not unlikely, having so much room for practice on themselves. Their pet character is a *bear*, for which they are naturally fitted, and their favourite witticism, "*Senza Mocalo !*" when they puff out a taper. One cannot help laughing (through the nose, indeed) at their folly ; yet, perhaps, it is not more laughable, in the main, than much of their wisdom. It should be added, to the credit of the Romans, that their orgies invariably go off with little or no outrage ; all is good-humoured, harmless hurly-burly ; they are carried away too fast by their rapture and the crowd, to think of picking your pocket. If a blow is ever given, it is sure to be by an Englishman, for some handful of *confetti* thrown on his span-new frock, to take off the gloss of the tailor's smell, with which he came to regale the Corso. When an Englishman does not resent nonsense with still greater, he thinks it a dishonour.

The celebration of the Carnival in New-Orleans is almost exclusively confined to the French Creole population : the Anglo-Americans act only as spectators, leaving all the burden of performance in the mummeries of the day, to their more mercurial brethren. Now and then a group of comical figures may be seen, displaying considerable ingenuity and humour ; but, upon the whole, taken as an exhibition of broad eccentricities, the Carnival in New-Orleans bears the same relation to that of any Italian or Spanish city, that a feeble translation of

a great work does to the spirited original, when the translator, not possessing a sufficient knowledge of the language of his author, fails to enter into the soul of centuries long since departed, and countries far away, and existing only as ruins, among which the ancient spirit, if not dead, yet lies but faintly diffused,

"With languish'd head unpropp'd,  
As one past hope abandon'd;  
In slavish habit—ill-fitted weeds,  
O'erworn and soil'd."

There was, however, one remarkable feature connected with the celebration of the Carnival at New-Orleans, which is strongly characteristic of that love for the embellishments and elegances of life which pervades all the better classes of Creoles. This was a procession, composed of between two and three hundred of the first gentlemen of the city, all dressed as Bedouin Arabs, and forming altogether one of the most imposing sights I ever beheld. The costumes were excellent, and, withal, extremely correct; and as the cavalcade swept by at a full gallop, or trotted majestically along through the densely-crowded streets, it required no great stretch of imagination to fancy that you beheld a horde of real children of the desert in motion. When Carnival frolics are made subservient to the display of so much taste as was evinced on this occasion, folly is indeed wisdom. The whole affair was purely intellectual, and reflected the highest credit on all the parties concerned in the management of it. I am also informed that a pageant of this description is exhibited every year, varying on each occasion in proportion to the number of characters that are to be assumed, and the different nations to be represented. This renders the last day of Carnival the gayest in the year: indeed, without the procession aforesaid, there would have been but little to attract and less to admire.

Soon after twelve o'clock the streets of the first municipality presented one solid, moving mass of human beings: every balcony and window, as far as the eye could reach, was filled with anxious spectators, watching for the approach of the cavalcade, or gazing good-humouredly upon the multitude below. Every spot from which a view could be obtained was of course crowded; while the splendid show of elegantly-dressed females, who gave the finishing grace and character to this resplendent scene, produced an effect delightful to be felt and never to be forgotten, but scarcely to be described. The procession did not, indeed, confine its movements and display to the first municipality; but from the peculiar construction of the houses in the Anglo-American quarter of the city, the sight was much less gorgeous and spirit-stirring than that everywhere presented in the French streets. The St. Charles Hotel was the only spot in the second municipality that had the least appearance of harmonizing well with the whole. The lofty flight of steps in front was literally thronged with persons of both sexes, struggling to obtain a sure foothold, so as to enjoy at leisure all the excitement of the approaching pageant; the splendid roof of the building echoing with the hum of hundreds, who seemed to hang over the scene in boisterous exultation; from every window poured forth a stream of beautiful light—it was the beauty of a city, where beauty certainly abounds more than in any other, concentrated, arrayed in its most becoming attire, and beaming forth with more than its most lovely looks; for the novelty and interest of the scene gave an intensity of expression to most of the female faces, which etiquette does not permit on common occasions, and which, if it did permit, habit would prevent being called forth. If all this should seem fanciful to the reader who did not witness the scene

of which I am attempting to portray the *spirit* merely, he will, I am sure, have the candour to suspect that it is only *because* he was not present that it seems so.

After parading the streets for three or four hours, and performing a variety of evolutions which would have reflected no discredit on the best trained corps of cavalry that ever wielded a lance or flourished a cimeter, the Bedouins repaired to a public place of *rendezvous*, where a sumptuous repast awaited their arrival, and then the hilarities of the season commenced in downright earnest. Towards ten o'clock the whole *troupe* marched off to the *Bal Costumé* in the St. Louis Exchange; and the picturesqueness of their appearance—the infinite variety and multitude of associations connected with their splendid costumes, conspired to give an air of grandeur to their entrance into the ballroom which it is difficult to imagine. The spacious apartments were crowded to suffocation, and the votaries of Terpsichore had scarcely room enough left to display their accomplishments to advantage. I was sorry to see so many of the Anglo-Americans in their customary black and blue colours—black trousers, blue coats, and nameless hats; but even they, “cold emblems of the marble age,” could not dim the splendour and magnificence of the magic scene. Among the female dresses the Greek costume was the favourite and most superb. Robes and vests of scarlet, Cashmere and cloth, richly embroidered, laced with gold, and gemmed with brilliants, shone dazzlingly around; turbans of various tissues, with plumes of silver and gold; Albanian caps gorgeously jewelled; Turkish and Persian shawls, and scarfs glittering with embroidery, and of every varying hue, presented to the eye of the painter the richness of the Venetian combined with the noble *contours* and softness of the Roman school. Though other

exhibitions might vie with, it would be difficult for any to excel, the magnificence of this scene, where thousands gazed in admiration on the brilliant beauties which Nature had formed, and the taste of past and present ages combined to adorn.

Besides the *Bal Masqué* at the St. Louis Exchange, there were at least nine or ten *soirées dansantes* in different quarters of the city, which must have filled the measure of recreation almost to overflowing; in fact, New-Orleans was one vast waltzing and galloping hall. The commingled sounds of fiddles and piano-fortes could be heard at every corner of the street throughout the livelong night. There was no thought of, no occupation, no interest in anything except dancing. Indeed, from the very commencement of the Carnival, dancing, and nothing but dancing, had been the order of the day. From *Le Jour des Rois*, all New-Orleans had been dancing or preparing to dance. Even Christmas, with its patriarchal traditions, its legendary tales, its crackling fagot, its joyful hearth, its yule log, in which, when a child, I sought for sweetmeats and bon-hons—poor old Christmas was banished somewhat earlier than usual, to make room for *banquettes et bougies*, heated rooms, and all the artificial pleasures and enjoyments of life. People seemed to have nothing else to do but to amuse themselves—to drown their senses in forgetfulness—to make their *Saturnalia* as long as possible, and to lighten the load of such a life by a round of brainless, valueless, and exaggerated enjoyments.

Wo to him who should seek in New-Orleans, during Carnival, for the comfort of a fireside, and the healthful joy of the domestic circle. No man is then his own master; he must belong, body and soul, to the ballroom—he must run the gauntlet of routs, *petits soupers*, and feasts of every kind.

Among the many fashionable resorts to which the



*élite* of society alone were admitted, I must not omit to mention the famous *Bals de Société*, as being the most exclusive *réunions* of that description ever attempted in this glorious republic. These balls resemble, in a good measure, those of Almack's in London : there is not a little of the same stiffness and formality, and about as great a number of obstacles to be surmounted before one can obtain admission to the enchanted ground. The only difference is, that with the lady patronesses of Almack's, strangers, and particularly Americans, are always sure to find favour ; whereas, with the stewards of the *Bals de Société*, strangers, no matter of what country or station, seldom find any favour at all. This occasioned a great many angry discussions in the course of the season among the families boarding at the St. Charles Hotel, where these aristocratic soirées were originally given. The said families, it appears, had conceived the very original idea, that, as boarders in the same house, they were entitled to an "invite"—an idea which, I am sorry to say, met with far less encouragement than was due to it, on account of the very comprehensive principle on which it was founded. Finding, at last, all their applications for admission treated with neglect, and that there was not even a prospective chance of their faring better, they, with a spirit worthy of a nobler cause, "struck their geese" to a man, and boldly gave the proprietors of the hotel to understand, that unless the "balls" were discontinued, they would march bag and baggage out of the house. This was not exactly the thing best calculated to please Messrs. Watriss and Mudge ; and to avert so terrible a catastrophe, intimation was actually given to the directors of the *Bals de Société* to transfer their patronage to a more congenial *locale*. I think it would be difficult for absurdity and impudence to be car-

ried to a more laughable extreme ; for, however inhospitable may have been the system which excluded all strangers from these assemblies, it is equally undeniable that the members had a right to please themselves, and that it was a gross outrage on common sense to interfere with their regulations.

The *Bals de Société* lost nothing either of their brilliancy or attraction by being forced to seek a sphere of action elsewhere. Mr. Milford, the well-known proprietor of the old American Hotel—the prince of gentlemanly caterers—the politest and most refined landlord that ever sat at the head of a public table—provided the directors with every accommodation that could be wished at his own private hotel, where, I am happy to say, he dwells in the midst of exuberant plenty, administering to the wants of his visitors with the same spirit of liberality that has rendered his name so famous in the annals of epicurism, and bidding fair to outrun every competitor in the race for popularity and success.

Now if it be the pleasure of the reader to compose his brow to serious contemplation, we will fancy ourselves, at twelve o'clock at night, in any of the magnificent saloons where all the world is preparing for Lent by laying up a plentiful store of sinings, all to be fasted away by devouring cod, salmon, etc., with every species of exquisite sauce. It would be edifying, as well as amusing, to discover what kind of self-denial is practised by feasting on the luxuries of the ocean instead of those of the land or the air. But we will not pause to consider this knotty question : my object is to discuss a point of much greater importance, namely, the art of dressing. The idea, I grant, is not entirely original, but, such as it is, it was suggested to me on noticing the dissimilarity of taste displayed by people of different nations, as I have had ample opportunity of observing them, both in the drawing-room

and at the evening assembly. It is strange, that what appears the pink of elegance to some should so frequently strike others as the very height of vulgarity! The Creole gentleman presents in his appearance a very fair specimen of the *juste milieu*. Discarding all that is tawdry or showy, he generally combines in his dress the utmost neatness and taste with a degree of simplicity which is only to be found among the better classes of Englishmen.

There is a very silly saying, that it takes nine tailors to make a man, whereas the truth is, that one first-rate tailor not only makes *many* men, but what is more essential, many fashionable men! Were it not for creators of this class, what a set of nincom-poops would the present race of dandies be! Strip them of their clothes, and they are mere nothings—grubs, destitute of the pith, sense, and other qualities of humanity; but view them in their perfect or butterfly state, how beautiful the insects are! fluttering about full of animation and life—admiring themselves and admired by others—displaying their exquisite forms and splendid tints till we are ready to exclaim with Shakspeare, “What a piece of work is man!”

From ancient to modern times—from the date of the fig-leaf to our day—the science of clothing has justly occupied the largest share of the attention of the human kind. The purple garments of Tyre—the coat-armour of the chivalrous ages—the importance of the clothiers of England at a later era, are but periodical glimpses of a subject which has engrossed the universal energies of the world throughout all periods. Ignorance may confound or confuse us in tracing these circumstances, but it is impossible to shut our eyes to the general truth. What was Solomon in all his glory but a *fashionable Jew* monarch? What were knights and warriors but persons rendered stout-hearted and gallant by wearing

*coats of mail*? What is the Church, be it of Rome or of the Reformation, but a collection of individuals known as members of *the cloth*? though the satirical Dean of St. Patrick's says,

"Men of their cloth should be minding their prayers,  
And not among ladies, to give themselves airs."

But the love of dress is of still greater importance; it is the first great inherent principle in our natures—the only certain innate idea implanted in our bosoms. Not to speak of misses with their earliest fine shoes or frocks, look at the boy just breeched. Does not that event constitute the proudest moment of his life? far prouder than that boasted of by the orator when his health is drunk, or when he receives a vote of thanks, and, forgetful of the truly proudest epoch in his existence, idly and erroneously attributes it to a later glory. Nay, is there not a longing and unconquerable desire in the softer sex to wear that honoured garment, which leads to an eternal struggle and competition which fills up the measure of life? And the satisfaction, the exultation, with which, when it is won, it is worn!—the world holds no higher felicity.

The effects of dress upon the mind are no less obvious and important than they are upon the body: the whole being is altered by mere outward habiliments. Observe a fellow with a coat of antique cut, unbrushed, slovenly; the knot on his cravat not to be called a *tie*; his waistcoat not only possessing a bottom button and button-hole, but absolutely buttoned all the way down; his pantaloons more or less than an inch and a half above the ankle: he has no manners, no gentility; he is regardless of himself and of those around him; his voice is loud, his language coarse, his carriage unseemly, and he neither looks, walks, stands, nor sits like a creature endowed with the divine image on earth. Much of the rudeness and vulgarity which

now prevails in places of public resort, and even in private company, is to be attributed to laxity in point of apparelling. Men in boots or gaiters do what men in pumps and silk stockings would be utterly ashamed of; and coloured neckcloths, I have no doubt, have led the way to so many atrocities (gradually descending in the scale from carelessness to ill-breeding, from ill-breeding to vice, and from vice to crime), that the halter has often been the consequence of a flash Belcher or a sporting stock.

Seeing, on these grounds, that prodigious social and moral evils result from inattention to dress in all its niceties, and that it is the grand distinction between civilization and savage life, it follows that it ought to be the chief, and, as it is among the superior orders to which I have alluded, almost the only concern of rational creatures.

It strikes me that the *arbitri elegantiarum* of former days would cut but a sorry figure by the side of a modern tailor of eminence—an *artiste* who measures men as if he were a geographer or astronomer, by quadrants, sextants, theodolites, and other complex instruments, though all simple to his superabundant ingenuity. The pictures which accompany our popular magazines are very apt illustrations of the tailor's labours. The individuals are distinguished by perfection of costume, unmarred by crease or wrinkle: none of Nature's journeymen could make such matchless creatures. A full-dressed exquisite, in silk hose and shorts, seated on a chair, is complacently contemplated by an equally glorious being, who happens to be standing up; and there is a great-coated gentleman very like a flash thief, or ditto thief-taker. Two little boys are inconceivably genteel; while more easy personages, with guns, whips, or switches, display the wonderful variety and sublime beauties of our species, when

dressed *comme il faut*. We gaze at the exhibition with intense admiration—we pause—and a sigh, almost a groan, escapes us when we reflect how few of the innumerable race of mankind, as it covers the surface of our globe, can by any possibility be thus adorned! Alas! we say (as if apostrophizing the want of education—ignorance—slavery), alas! that some grand and powerful institution should not be formed to promote the spread of well-cut clothes among the dark and hapless nations of the universe—that zealous and properly instructed individuals should not be sent forth to Africa, and India, and Australia, and to the distant isles, to new-rig the ill-dressed, and to cover the nakedness of the savage! The cabinet ministers at Washington should think of it: when the President has drawn up and signed his last veto, they will have little else to do. And where could they direct their mighty intelligence—their stupendous energies, to a cause so vitally and enduringly connected as this with the improvement of mankind?

## CHAPTER XVIII.

New-Orleans without Literary or Scientific Institutions.—Pleasures of Knowledge.—Usefulness of Scientific Pursuits.—Benefits of Oral Discussion.—Sympathies of Genius.—Beneficial Results arising from Public Institutions for the advancement of Science, Literature, and the Fine Arts.—The great Missouri Leviathan.—American Antiquities.—Effects on New-Orleans Society from the want of Useful Institutions.—Lectures on Shakspeare.—Religious Prejudices against such Lectures.—A Compliment from the House of Representatives.—General Harrison and the New Presidency.—Society of Native Americans, and their Efforts to exclude Foreigners from the Elective Franchise.—Character of the Speakers.—Vulgar Abuse of Foreigners.—Encouragement given to Emigrants, and their Treatment when here.—Remarks on Emigration.—Benefits resulting to America from Emigration.—Farewell Engagement.—Arrival of Fanny Elssler.—Extraordinary Excitement thereupon.—A few passing Observations on her Career.

THERE is nothing in which New-Orleans is more strikingly inferior to other American cities of the same magnitude, than in the utter absence of public institutions for the promotion of scientific knowledge, or the encouragement of literature and the fine arts. It is true that institutions of this kind are, from their very nature, calculated to diffuse, and *have*, in fact, diffused over the surface of society a superficial semblance of knowledge, which only serves to show the real absence of it—a glimmer of light, which only makes the prevailing darkness more obvious. But the effects arising from this, however ridiculous they may sometimes be, can never become very mischievous among a people like the Americans, who never, for any length of time, fancy themselves what they are not and cannot be, nor run after a shadow, nor even a substance, which they cannot reach; so that, although these institutions may have contributed, in many cases, to increase a foolish, but somewhat natural desire which

we all of us have, to be thought more knowing than we actually are, or than we choose to take the trouble of making ourselves, yet it is not to be doubted that they have also diffused an anxious craving and a diligent search after knowledge, arising out of a real perception of its value, and a sincere love of it for its nature and its effects.

Of all the strong and absorbing pleasures of the human mind, there is none equal to that afforded by new knowledge. Discovery in whatever branch of science fills the mind with something more nearly approaching to ecstasy than any other delight of which our nature is susceptible; that mysterious joy—incomprehensible if man were not immortal—which accompanies the hope of influencing unborn generations—that rapture, solemn and sublime, with which a human mind, possessing or possessed by some great truth, sees in prophetic vision that truth acknowledged by mankind, and itself, long ages afterward, remembered and associated therewith as its interpreter and minister, and sharing in the offering duly paid of honour and of love, till it becomes a power upon the earth, and fills the world with felt or unseen influence—that joy, which thrills the most deeply minds, the most contemptuous of mere ephemeral reputation, and men who care the least for common marks of popular applause or outward dignity; and which shows, also, how intensely man desires, even in intellectual things, the sympathy of man!

Such being the vast amount of pure and exalted gratification accruing to mankind from scientific pursuits, every effort should be made by those in power, in every community, to facilitate its attainment. This can only be done through the medium of public institutions, where oral discussions are encouraged as the principal means of making known among their members the opinions, views, and dis-



coveries of each other—where eminent men are called to prepare reports upon the existing state of knowledge in the principal departments of science; establishing in this way a system of strict co-operation between the labourers in one common field, and effecting, more fully than could be done by any other plan, a combination of intellectual exertions. It is true that individual energy, individual patience, individual genius, have all been needed, to tear away, fold after fold, the veil which hung before the shrine of Nature—to penetrate, through thickest gloom, into those Delphic depths where Truth lies concealed, and force the reluctant sibyl to utter her oracular responses. But while recognising, in the fullest manner, the necessity for private exertion, and the ultimate connexion of every human act and human thought with the personal being of man, it must not be forgotten that the social feelings make up a large and powerful part of that complex and multiform being. The affections act upon the intellect—the heart upon the head. In the very silence and solitude of its meditations, genius is still essentially sympathetic—is sensitive to influences from without, and fain would spread itself abroad, and embrace the whole circle of humanity with the strength of a world-grasping love. Look where we will, from the loftiest and most solitary sage that ever desired “the propagation of his own memory,” and who had committed his lonely labours to the world in the full assurance that an age would come when that memory would not be suffered to die—down to the humblest labourer that was ever content to co-operate subordinately with others, and hoped for nothing more than a present and tangible recompense, we everywhere perceive the operation of that social spirit—that deep, instinctive yearning after sympathy, to use the power and to guide the influences of which, associations of the nature I speak of are formed.

One of the most beneficial results connected with public institutions for the advancement of science, literature, and the fine arts, is derived from the reading of valuable papers, and their subsequent publication *at the expense of the society*, after being approved of by a committee of examination. This is a very great and substantial good, because the most valuable papers are seldom the most attractive to the mass of readers, and because the authors of such papers are rarely able to defray, from their own means, the cost of publication. There is no doubt that, but for this resource, many productions of the greatest value would have been entirely suppressed. Besides, the approbation of a body of learned men (which is, at least, partially implied in their undertaking to publish a learned paper) cannot but be accounted a gratifying and honourable reward, the hope of which must greatly cheer and encourage the author in his toils. Thus both the *Principia* and *Optics* of Newton were published at the request of the Royal Society of London. Newton, indeed, might well have thought that those works did not need their sanction, if the meekness of his high faculties had permitted him to judge of himself as all other men have judged of him: but the gratitude of mankind is not, therefore, the less due to the society whose request prevailed over his own modest reluctance, and procured those treasures for that and every succeeding age.

The influence of public institutions on literature and the fine arts is still more powerful and decisive: their effects are observable on the community at large—on its habits of thought, its feelings, and opinions. They add to the intellectual stature of the age, by diffusing throughout society a passionate yearning after book-knowledge, and a general inclination to converse on literary topics. Whereas, in those cities where the importance of such insti-

tutions as an element of civilization has not been rightly estimated, people live on like the snail in the Hindu proverb, which, seeing nothing beyond its shell, believed it to be the finest palace in the world. The intercommunication which of late years has become so rapid and extensive between the different nations of the earth, has not only shaken the strongholds of prejudice, and put ignorance itself to shame, but has rendered the system of giving lectures on every subject connected with the progressive development of the universal mind the readiest instrument for improving the understanding, and raising the moral character of man. Among young communities especially, oral information will always be preferred to solitary reading : the people here are content to take the shortest way to acquire what little learning they desire. The native inhabitants of the Indian Peninsula and the neighbouring isles not only maintain a correspondence between cities and nations by means of painting, and sculpture, and dramatic representations, but keep up a certain uniformity of character, and preserve an air of politeness in their intercourse, which their knowledge of these arts inspires. They would be reluctant to study painting and sculpture in academies, but would lie and gaze by the hour on a noble statue or a historic painting, and thus imbibe a far loftier notion of the power of the people who produced them than they could in any other way. They would smile were they desired to puzzle out the meaning of Shakspeare through the medium of their broken English, but would go in crowds to see Macbeth represented : in short, they dislike all mental labour, and have but little relish for bodily ; and as Art springs from Nature, and speaks all languages with the same clearness and fluency, they are content to take her for their instructress.

There was shown about this time in New-Or-

leans the great "Missouri Leviathan," which the exhibitor averred to have belonged to that family of extinct monsters of the ancient earth mentioned in the sacred Scriptures.\* The enormous size and singular formation of the skeleton were certainly much in favour of the hypothesis; it evinced, at all events, that every generation of man is born to stare at something new, which, as long as it eludes the understanding, proves a very African *Fetische* to the many, and a Gordian knot to the few—that there are mysteries which require a thousand years for their solution—grand phenomena, that oppose mighty barriers to human investigation—lessons which teach us our own proper littleness better than the starry language graven on the face of the nightly heavens, or than the ten thousand ponderous tomes bequeathed us by former times, and of which they treasure the multifarious wisdom. The "Missouri Leviathan," however, attracted but indifferent notice in New-Orleans. Some treated the whole affair as a gross imposition—a superlative hoax of some "'cute" Yankee; while others looked at the announcement describing this wonder of the ancient world with as much unconcern as if they had been reading an inscription on the tombstone of a defunct relative; and at last the exhibition was removed, as no interest was manifested either in behalf of the antediluvian memento or of its discoverer. It is easy to account for this apathy in regard to a subject which ought to have been so deeply interesting to every American: it is to be ascribed to want of information in relation to American antiquities; and to the utter absence of teachers, able and willing to enlighten the public mind through the medium of instructive lectures.

I can hardly conceive of anything more calculated to beget enthusiasm in the mind of every lover of science than the study of American antiquities;

as it is evident, from the multiplicity of facts that have lately been elicited, that America, though called the New World, is quite as old as any other portion of it. Nor is it at all improbable that its aborigines are the *oldest* of the race of Adam; for, with the exception of the Pyramids of Egypt, and the vases lately discovered in Italy twenty feet below the present surface of the soil, there is nothing to show, in the Old World, as proofs of antiquity, equal to the fact recorded some years ago by Mr. Ferrall, who states that at the Bull Shoals, in the east branch of White River, in Missouri, several feet below the surface of the river, *reliquiæ* were found, which indicated that the spot had formerly been the seat of metallurgical operations, where the alloy appeared to be lead united with silver. Arrow-heads cut out of flint, and fragments of earthenware that had undergone the action of fire, were also found there; and though there are no data to tell us at what period these operations were carried on, the time must have been very remote, as the present banks have been formed since, and entirely by alluvial deposits.

A still more curious circumstance is, that, a few years ago, a number of pigmy graves were discovered near Merrimac River, in St. Louis County. The coffins were of stone, and the length of the bodies could not have exceeded three feet and a half or four feet; and as the graves were numerous, and the skeletons in some nearly entire, it was ascertained that they could not have been those of children. All this would seem to show that the past races of men were of smaller stature than those of our times. It is not, however, so much by their size, as by their proficiency in the arts, that we can form the best idea of the antiquity of any given race. Now, as we partly prove the antiquity of Egypt by the different facts connected with its mummies, so

is it fair to infer, that, where mummies are found in America, we have in this a convincing proof of the existence there of a race long since extinct; and when once the mind is thus thrown back on the past, there is no limit to the view spread out before it.

But it will be said, "If the world be so very old, how can we account for the frequent discoveries of new people in different portions of it?" The fact is, the people thus met with may have existed time out of mind; as in the case of Clapperton's discovery of a numerous nation in the very heart of Africa, who must have been there for many hundred years; and even the comparatively recent discovery of the New World only proves that, though the means of making it might have existed long before, yet sufficient motives for undertaking the voyage were wanting, or, if they existed in the minds of single individuals, those individuals were without the necessary means for putting their wishes into execution.

True it is, that, in consequence of the art of printing, there is less chance now than heretofore that the knowledge of a people that has once existed should ever be completely obliterated; yet it is certainly possible, though with this advantage, that even a language may be lost, as in the case of that of Poland, which will, in all probability, be swallowed up in the Russian, and be studied in after times as are now the hieroglyphics of Egypt, or the less intelligible arrow-headed letters on the bricks of Babylon; nay, even the Greek itself—the noblest medium ever invented by man for the conveyance of thought—stands every chance of being, ere long, literally and truly a dead language, when we see so little attention paid to it in a country in other respects boasting of its high state of civilization.

Reasoning thus, it requires but little of the spirit

of prophecy to predict that, at some distant day, Italy will be as little known to the inhabitants of Australia, as New-Holland is at present to the people of Italy ; for, unless the Australians should be driven to the Mediterranean by the advantages of commerce, what motive will there be to induce them to pass the Straits of Gibraltar ? nay, more, even to lead them to England, when the only native product of that country (its tin) shall either be exhausted, or the market better supplied by some of the islands in the Indian Archipelago ?—and when that time shall have arrived, thousands of years may pass before England, once lost, will again be discovered. This will doubtless appear a startling paradox to those who now speak of England as the mistress of the ocean, and see her flag waving in triumph over the four quarters of the globe. The time, however, has been, when the like could be said of Tyre, of Carthage, and of Venice ; and still they have all sunk, or are rapidly sinking, into oblivion. The Phœnician dialect is quite lost ; and even of the language of the second we know nothing, save from a scene or two in Plautus ; and the spot where she once stood is now a matter of dispute. What was it but the spirit of commercial enterprise that first led her to Britain (*the foreign tin-land*), in search of a metal to be found nowhere else so plentiful or so good as in the Scilly Islands, named by the Greeks *Κασσιτεριδες*, from *Κασσιτερος*, tin ; while the Latin word *Stannium* proves its connexion with the Cornish *Stan*, still preserved in the word *Stannary*, i. e., the *tin dues* paid to the Duchy of Cornwall.

To return, however, from this digression to the subject more immediately under consideration—the importance of literary and scientific institutions as an element of civilization.

One of the most pernicious effects on New-Orleans society, arising from the utter absence of use-

ful institutions, or public places of instruction of any kind, is observable, as I noticed before, in that spirit of indifference which is manifested towards everything that is either sound in literature or instructive in science. This is the more to be regretted, as few cities possess so many master-spirits capable of taking the lead in mental improvement—men qualified by learning, education, and character to give a healthful impetus to the general mind, and to direct it in the search of knowledge. A city that can boast of such men as GRIMES and SOULLÉ in the law, Clapp in the church, and Stone and Lussenberg in medical science, should, in my humble opinion, have possessed, long before this, some sort of association or public institute, to serve as an antidote against the allurements of the gambling-table and the bar-room, and where the inexperienced youth might find wherewithal to gratify his mental aspirations.

Immediately after returning from my fruitless trip to Vicksburg, I applied myself with all diligence to procure a room for the purpose of delivering a course of lectures on Shakspeare. Nothing of the kind had ever been attempted in New-Orleans before, and I consequently anticipated favourable results from the experiment. Had I, however, taken the benefit of a second reflection, I might, by a very easy process of ratiocination, have arrived at the conclusion that the same circumstances which had hitherto kept the public mind in abeyance on the subject of lectures, would most probably militate against the popularity of those contemplated by me. Be that as it may, I failed in all my attempts to procure a suitable place; no public room of the description required having ever been prepared for purposes of oral instruction. I was equally unsuccessful with the ministers of the different churches and denominations to whom I applied. They all shrunk with holy horror from the bare thought of suffering the pulpit to be contam-



inated by so mundane an exhibition as a dissertation on the divine writings of Shakspeare, in connexion with ethics and the pursuits of literature, although they had permitted Mr. Silk Buckingham to expectorate his monstrous lies about the Holy Land and other countries which he had never visited except in imagination. Dr. C\*\*\*\*, one of the most enlightened, eloquent, and liberal divines I ever conversed with, was the only one who took a philosophic view of the subject, and seemed disposed to favour my wishes ; but, as the pews of the church of which he is the pastor were the property of the individuals composing his congregation, he could not, of course, control their feelings, which had been unanimously expressed against my application.

I was just on the point of giving up in despair all farther thoughts about the matter, when the Hon. Judge G\*\*\*\*, of the Legislature, one of the noblest-minded men that God ever stamped his image upon, introduced a resolution in the House of Representatives, offering the use of their Hall for my lectures. The manner in which the motion was made, and the unanimity of opinion at once expressed in its favour, I could not but regard as one of the most gratifying compliments that could have been paid to me. That the experiment did not succeed to the full extent of my expectations, could detract nothing from the nobility of the act itself, nor lessen my gratitude towards the honourable body which had conferred so great a mark of favour upon me.

Independent of the general apathy of the public in regard to subjects, the contemplation of which requires any unusual exercise of thought, there were other causes at this particular season of the year which operated strongly against my chance of success. First and foremost, there was the usual excitement attending a presidential election and the overthrow of the political party actually in power.

A great change had just occurred in high places—another plunge was being made by restless and ambitious minds into the vortex of politics. Then there were meetings of “Native Americans” almost every night of the week, for the purpose of remodelling the Naturalization Act and excluding foreigners—no matter how identified with the soil by long residence or family connexions—from all participation in the elective franchise. These meetings were, for the most part, addressed by persons well known for their hostility to England and everything English. No expression was too coarse—no epithet in the language too rabid or vile to be employed by these *eloquent* orators in their attempts to degrade the character of foreigners to the lowest possible standard. Now, although I am by no means disposed to quarrel with a people for seeking to ameliorate their institutions, and to preserve inviolable the privileges which belong to them as free-born native citizens, still I cannot help looking upon the system of bitter denunciation against foreigners, now so prevalent throughout the country, as being exceedingly ungracious and unjust. The absurdity of the thing is so glaring, that none but furious demagogues can be found engaged in this work of abuse; for, without dwelling on the important fact that it is to the labour of foreigners that America is chiefly indebted for all her internal improvements, it is well known that the very individuals against whom the batteries of vulgar detraction are thus recklessly levelled, have been inveigled to these shores by American agents—actually seduced to leave the land of their birth and the localities most dear to their hearts by specious promises, paraded in flaming handbills, studiously circulated in every town and village of Ireland, and well calculated to impose upon men of sanguine temperaments—active and enterprising, and who, finding

their means of subsistence diminishing, and the prospects of providing for their families every day becoming more discouraging, consent to encounter all the difficulties incident to a new country, that they may secure prosperity to their children, and to themselves that proffered charter of citizenship in a land of freedom, which is held out to them as the greatest boon and the most tempting inducement to emigration. It also appears to me that, with the blood of brotherhood in our veins—a common language, a common literature, and common objects in view in all that relates to the ennobling of man, there should be less vituperation and greater forbearance when the mother-country is made the subject of remark.

It is pretty generally admitted, that when God bade man go forth, and multiply, and replenish the earth, he meant him to enjoy the same. But if this were the Divine intention—and the Bible says something marvellously like it—then I am quite certain that in many countries the benevolent design has been woefully defeated. Man has “found out many inventions;” but the worst of all is that which has enabled one class to seize upon the great common of Nature, and hold it to the exclusion of all their brethren. In England, an island which, under proper arrangements, is capable of maintaining liberally its entire population, one million of human beings live in luxury, while sixteen millions scramble for crumbs. There is no denying the fact, that in that country the rich are far too rich, and the poor far too poor; and that the laws which tend to create and maintain such enormous inequality must sooner or later be greatly modified or repealed. Knowledge is removing the film from men’s eyes; and the time is approaching when the poet’s vision will be realized, and when it will be universally admitted that, whatever may be his social condition,

“A man’s a man for a’ that.”

Admitting the existence of these social evils to their fullest extent, emigration becomes, under such circumstances, absolutely indispensable. When bees grow too numerous for their hive, the youthful portion of the insect community seek a new one; and in like manner, that prudent people, the Scotch, send forth swarms of their young men to the East, West, and South: the Irish follow their example; while the English alone still adhere in beggary to the soil on which they were born, and endure all evils rather than forsake their native home. Education, however, has begun to open the eyes of the lower orders even there: they find that their island is at present too productive in three important things—their machinery produces more goods than they can find a market for; their authors, more books than readers to purchase them; and their ladies, more sons and daughters than the country can, as things are, maintain. For each one of these very serious evils, emigration has been proposed as the readiest and most efficient remedy.

Let it be here recollected, that of those whose necessities at home have driven them to expatriation, the greater number have removed to the United States in preference to British America—with at least equal benefit to themselves, though much to the disadvantage of the mother-country; for her colonies being parts of her empire, it is evident that all the physical and moral strength thus added to the United States is so much subtracted from the former and gained by the latter. By what arguments, therefore, can these infuriated declaimers against foreign intrusion support their new-fangled theories? It certainly cannot be said that an enlightened love of country is their ruling principle of action.

The British colonies being chiefly supplied with manufactures from the mother-country, every new

settler in them increases the demand for labour at home, whereas every emigrant to the United States diminishes such demand. I have seen a plain calculation, showing very clearly that, by 30,000 of her subjects coming annually to the United States for ten years, the loss to Great Britain would be thirty millions of pounds sterling at the end of that period. This amount would be made up of the sums paid for passages in American ships; money brought away by the emigrants; and the diminished demand for British fabrics. It is shown by the British custom-house returns, that every inhabitant of the colonies takes annually at least thirteen dollars worth of British goods, whereas each individual in the United States requires less than two dollars worth; the difference being supplied principally by home manufactures. These are weighty considerations for those who are accustomed to rail against the naturalization of foreigners.

Towards the latter end of March, immediately after the completion of my course of lectures, I played a farewell engagement at the St. Charles. From the numerous acquaintances I had formed in the city, a great deal was expected; but scarcely had my name been announced, when an event of such paramount importance to the political, social, and moral world took place, that the public mind was completely bewildered, and the fountains of generous sympathy became at once stagnant or dried up. This great event was neither more nor less than the arrival of Fanny Elssler from Havana! The steamer conveying that illustrious personage to the shores of Louisiana had scarcely touched the wharf, and the fact that she was the bearer of so precious a freight was scarcely known, before the whole city rang with acclamations of joy. Her progress to the St. Charles Hotel was a complete triumph: no public benefactor or laurel-crowned

hero ever met with so glorious a reception! The morning after the arrival of this earthly divinity, every object, animate and inanimate, bore the impress of a great change. The leading editorials of every newspaper I happened to take up, exhibited greater or less symptoms of a distempered fancy: the editors themselves no longer sauntered along the streets with that becoming carelessness of step which had hitherto characterized their movements. Some looked wild with expectancy, others frantic with delight; suspense bedimmed the lustre of many an eye; and joy or sadness was marked on every countenance, as its possessor had secured or lost the happiness of being introduced to the idol of the day. The pavement fronting the windows of this immaculate creature was crowded from "dawn till dewy eve" with anxious spectators, kindly forgetful of their business and their families in their eagerness to catch even a momentary glimpse of a being of so much purity. Appetite for food was at a stand-still: even the wild turkeys so daintily laid out on the public tables, looked as if they had perished by slow consumption, or died of a broken heart. The very phraseology of common parlance was no longer the same; nay, the sign-boards themselves swung with a peculiar sound and air, betokening sympathy with the public sentiment. The hammer of the auctioneer was everywhere motionless and silent, except where it announced the disposal of box-tickets for Elssler's nights to the fortunate bidders for that *unique* and high-seasoned luxury. The only business transactions during this remarkable period consisted of raffles for the various objects which the "Divine Fanny" (so this frail specimen of ordinary humanity is now impiously called) had used, or even accidentally touched, during her voyage—from the downy couch which her vestal form had pressed, to the very

plank placed from the steamer for her safe disembarkation.

Well, after all, a good, hearty, straightforward folly like this is worth more than a crooked wisdom. I love fools all the better from their being nowadays so scarce in the world. The times are past when it was necessary to seek wise men with a lantern; now you may run miles before you can find a fool; and that because, in this enlightened era, wisdom can be so cheaply purchased. Many people become fools from too much wisdom; but these are not the right sort—not the Elssler fools. Most persons would be classed with these latter where their words and actions indicate the complete negation of wisdom; but this may be mere affectation—for some object. Such persons may become wise again when their assumed folly has brought the sought-for advantage—they play the fool from excess of wisdom. But the genuine Elssler fools are such without any previous wisdom—they treat folly itself foolishly.

Let not the reader suppose, from the character of these remarks, that I am insensible to the charms of the ballet, or incapable of appreciating the talents of so graceful a dancer as Fanny Elssler. I am as fully aware as any one of her most ardent admirers can be, that the old joke of calling legs understandings, ceases to be a joke when applied to her; that there is soul in her *sole*, and more point in her toes than in most people's conversation. But when I look around and mark the disastrous consequences of this woman's advent to this country—when I see her passing from place to place like a destroying angel, blasting and withering everything dramatic with which she comes in contact—closing a theatre here—ruining a manager there—prostrating the profession everywhere; and carrying penury and consternation to the desolate hearths of

hundreds of unemployed actors, I cannot help asking myself the question, "How has all this been accomplished?" Is it proper that a woman who has been the cause of so much mischief, in consequence of her grasping avarice (for the humbug of charitable donations so ostentatiously trumpeted forth to the world through the newspapers can only deceive the unthinking and the unwary), should receive that adoration which is denied to the purest of philanthropists and the bravest of heroes? Or is it likely that this woman's popularity would have been half as great, or half as destructive to everything that is legitimate and good, had she depended solely upon the exercise of her talents, however splendid in themselves?

To all this I answer no. Fanny Elssler's career in this country has been attended by some of the most disgraceful impositions on the gullibility of the public that were ever attempted by a public character. The lady, however, is not so much to blame as one of her travelling companions. It would fill up volumes to relate by what unheard-of schemes, stratagems, and machinations this man has contrived to keep up that artificial excitement which has proved so ruinous to the fortunes of the legitimate drama in America. What numbers of fabulous accounts of Elssler's life have been written and circulated under his especial direction! What an immensity of romantic adventures that never happened! What stirring incidents that never took place! and, above all, what exalted virtues have been ascribed to the lady, which must have called up the blush of shame *even to her cheek!* This individual is a bold man: his resources are immense—his effrontery is astounding. The circumstance of his presuming to give instructions to an actor of high standing how he was to conceive a certain character, so that he should not touch any



portion of Miss Elssler's garment during the performance, is of itself sufficient to show how far impudence can go ; while the fact of his having written for the public papers abusive articles against actors engaged in the same piece with his paragon, proves him to be thoroughly and radically destitute of honourable principle. I speak of these matters understandingly, and with a full knowledge of the facts. In any other country, such a man would have been pelted in the streets with rotten apples : in America, had he not been a native and "to the manner born," he would have been stigmatized "a foreign vagabond."

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## CHAPTER XIX.

**Final Departure from New-Orleans.—A beautiful Night.—Astronomical Abstractions.—Origin and Foundation of Astronomy.—Popular Prejudices.—How to study Astronomical Science.—Arrival at Mobile.—Start for Montgomery.—Character of the Country.—The Wonders that have been accomplished by Steam Navigation.—Gradual Increase of Motion.—Arrive at Montgomery.—Dreadful Consequences of the Freshet.—Destruction of the Roads, and my Detention in consequence.—Lecture on Shakspeare.—Character of the Audience.—Retrospective Glance at the latest Publications.—Cooper's "Mercedes."<sup>n</sup>—Contrariety of Opinion on its Merits.—Cooper and his Detractors.—The Unchristian Principle which regulates Society.—Modern Critics, and the Effects of Modern Criticism on Authors generally.—Requisites for a Modern Critic.**

On the 25th of March I once more took leave of New-Orleans, and all the endearing associations I had formed among its hospitable inhabitants. The passage to Mobile was extremely slow and tedious this time, but the night was so enchantingly serene and beautiful that I could almost have wished that the gates of the east might remain closed forever.

It is astonishing how imperceptibly the mind is hushed to meditation by the sight of a cloudless sky gorgeously fretted with stars. To the student of astronomy, such a night would have afforded the richest field for contemplation that an enthusiast ever dreamed of. But what is it we contemplate when we fix our inquiring gaze on the brightest of the starry train? A glittering point—of which we know only that the body which sends forth such streams of radiance must be inconceivably too remote to borrow its lustre from the sun of our system, or from any other sun; for, of necessity, so glorious an orb, if existing, would be visible to us. The star we behold, therefore, must be itself a sun—the fountain of light—the soul and centre of revolving worlds. We know that, with the aid afforded by the most powerful and delicate instruments, the distance of this shining body baffles all computation, though such is the minuteness of modern instrumental graduation, that angles, formerly considered to be insensible, are now measured with the greatest accuracy. Where calculation fails, imagination takes up the wondrous theme, and vainly essays to fix the period when yon bright orb first shone forth in primeval beauty; and as we can assign no date to its original, neither can we to the epoch when the hand that framed it shall consign it to its original nonentity. In surveying the glorious host—"stars densely thronging still"—it is absurd to suppose them mere twinkling lights to garnish the blue vault of heaven—to furnish speculation for philosophers—to excite the admiration, or to add to the happiness of man. Returning from the boundless survey, it is with a deep conviction of our nothingness, and that these glittering gems that stud the celestial arches are to us enshrined in the profoundest mystery. We behold, admire, and meditate, but the soul sinks dismayed in the attempt to


unravel these mighty wonders, no less inexplicable than infinitude in duration or in space. We must conclude that new creations are taking place, vast and beautiful, from the sudden appearance of new stars, unless, indeed, we may suppose that their light, after traversing space for thousands of years, has but newly arrived at our earth; and we may infer, from the disappearance of others, that the awful mandate has gone forth, and brilliant systems have been blotted from the ample page of the universe.

Astronomy, like every other science, has its foundation in facts obtained by observation; and an astronomical system is but a series of inferences drawn from those facts, to explain the celestial phenomena—their occurrence and connexions, and their relations to each other. Consequently, the history of astronomy dates from the earliest observations of the heavenly bodies, and the first attempts to account for their phenomena and movements. But as these observations were necessarily very limited and imperfect, so the theories based upon them appear to us moderns whimsical and ridiculous in the extreme. Ignorance is a powerful stimulant to the imagination; and, consequently, theories dictated by ignorance are usually the wildest of poetic fictions. Still we should not stigmatize these fancies, idle as they may seem, as wholly unworthy of notice: thus Phœbus driving the chariot of the sun—the Dragon supposed by the Hindus occasionally to swallow the moon—the Algerine's hypothesis, that the old moons were cut up for stars—the ancient joke, that the sun turns back from west to east, but cannot be seen, because it makes the journey by night: these, and a thousand other similar fables, are interesting as the first steps in the process of attempting to explain the phenomena of nature. After glancing at these infant theories, we may proceed to observe how they were supplanted by others, somewhat more

rational, as new truths were brought to light, until, tracing the progress of speculation and discovery step by step, we arrive at length at the true system, based upon the careful consideration of surely-established facts, and cautious deductions from them.

But, it may be asked, what is the use of thus introducing matters familiar to every well-instructed person? I answer, because well-instructed persons are by no means as plentiful as the world imagines. The great outlines of astronomical science are within the range of an ordinary schoolboy's capacity, but they have as yet been presented only in forms that are calculated rather to discourage the youthful mind than to invite it to their study. Nature began by pointing the attention of man to the celestial luminaries; and in the same way should we commence with the young astronomical student: thus, let him observe for himself the rising and setting sun—the variations in the length of the day and night—and carefully note down his observations; by this means he will be led to reflect on these matters, whether you direct his attention to them or not. Let the phases of the moon be his next subject for contemplation: he will soon notice that the changes in the appearance of this planet are periodic; and, consequently, he will form for himself the idea of a lunar month. The young and the old gaze with equal admiration on the starry heavens; nor would it be difficult to convert this admiring gaze into a careful observation of their phenomena—the results of such observation to be registered and preserved, as before recommended.

After paying a round of farewell visits to my excellent friends at Mobile, I embarked, on the 27th, for Montgomery, which place we reached on the 29th, after a wearisome passage of forty-eight hours, diversified only by protracted stoppages at the various landing-places, and through a wild and unin-



teresting country. These landing-places have been constructed along the river for the shipment of cotton. It may be said with truth, that by steam America has ploughed her deserts, and established cities in her wildernesses. Forty years ago, the settlers of her distant inland regions, after a tedious voyage of one or two thousand miles down her mighty rivers, might find a market for their products. But they could not return against the rapid stream with their rude barks, and, as there were no roads, it required a journey through the wilderness on foot, of months' duration, to reach again their far-off homes: bulky commodities in exchange they could not take, and money was then all but useless in the prairies of the West. Thus the vast and fertile interior of America lay comparatively inert and lifeless, until Fulton (who was laughed at as a madman) contrived to set his steam to work, and to put his paddle-wheels in motion. By this new and triumphant application of a mighty power, the remotest regions were brought, for all commercial purposes, within a few days' journey of the seacoast, and America thrust forward one hundred years in her career of greatness.

Were the wise man who declared that there was nothing new under the sun, living in our days, he would, I am inclined to believe, be of a different opinion. Everything is now new—or, to say the least, there is little that is old. I would ask him, Did he ever ascend into the third heaven in a balloon? Did he ever move over the vales of Judea, or on the plains of Assyria, in one of the royal chariots, with the speed of a newspaper express on the New-York and Philadelphia railway! I can answer for him—never. And yet all these miraculous matters are but in their infancy. Motion has been gradually increasing in velocity, from the crawling of the snail to the flight of the hawk. For

myself, I long ago sat down, resolved to marvel at nothing; and it is well I did so; for travelling on ground, under ground, in the air, and on the water, is fairly getting the better of this age's unbelief in the marvellous: nothing that imagination ever coaxed human credulity to swallow, comes up to what is now done or doing. The labours of the inventive Watt, of the ingenious Rennie, and of the poetic though practical Telford, laid the foundation for all these mechanical wonders.

On my arrival at Montgomery, I found that quiet and sober-minded town in an unusual state of excitement, owing to the late freshets which had inundated the State of Alabama, destroying the crops on a great number of plantations, sweeping off all the live-stock that was upon them, and carrying away bridges of the greatest strength and the largest dimensions. It was the most disastrous occurrence of the kind that had taken place within the memory of the oldest inhabitants. Every new account was fraught with information of the most appalling character, and the public mind was thus kept in a perpetual whirl of anxiety and suspense. Dead cattle, trees torn up by the roots, and fragments of household furniture, were seen floating on every stream for hundreds of miles around: in short, the demon of devastation had desolated the country far and wide, and a general earthquake could scarcely have changed the face of Nature more completely. To me, this state of things was particularly distressing; for, as the roads had been partially destroyed by the flood, so as to put an end to all travelling for several days, I had no alternative but to remain where I was: a circumstance which annoyed me excessively, as I had promised Mr. Abbott, the talented manager of the Charleston Theatre, to be in that city on a certain day.

I remember a very singular, though somewhat

irreverent remark, made once in my presence by a wag, who, on being asked his opinion respecting a certain village, situated in one of the most retired and unobtrusive spots in the country, quaintly replied, that, little as he should like to live in such a place, he would be still more averse to dying there, for fear that he might be forgotten at the resurrection. Now, in my opinion, Montgomery is just such another place: still, I had no great reason, after all, to regret the circumstances which detained me there for a few days. An utter foe to indolence, and never more happy than when I am engaged either in acquiring or imparting information, I at once announced my intention of giving lectures, which was received with demonstrations of friendly feeling by nearly every intelligent person in the town. The public press seconded my efforts in the most liberal and obliging manner; while a clergyman of the Anabaptist persuasion tendered me the free use of his church, which, for excellence of sound, I found superior to any building I had ever before lectured in. It is not unworthy of remark, that in this place, so remote from the bustle and turmoil of the artificial world, I found an audience much more attentive and well-behaved than usually falls to the lot of a public speaker, even in those cities where refinement and politeness are supposed to have their headquarters.

One advantage which I derived from this untoward delay was, that it enabled me to take a dip into the circulating library of the town, and to familiarize myself, more than I had for some time been able to do, with what had been going on in the world of letters. After scrutinizing a dozen volumes or more of heterogeneous matter, without feeling very decidedly elevated by the operation, I took possession of Cooper's new novel of "Mercedes," with which I retired to the solitude of my

chamber, pretty much in the spirit of the miser when he pays a periodical visit to his long-hoarded gold. The reiterated volleys of abuse which were about this time being poured upon this great and original writer, made me the more anxious to read this last production of his pen with all the attention due to a work coming from so distinguished a source, "Mercedes" has been condemned by the Whig press throughout the country in terms of absolute ferocity: by the other party it has been praised as at least equal to any of Mr. Cooper's previous productions. To read these contradictory opinions might induce one to believe that there is no certain criterion of merit; but it is far otherwise. The criterion of literary merit is very determinate and precise. It does not consist in gaudy embellishments, but in creative combinations of thoughts and images which have the stamp of verisimilitude, and which are grand, or pathetic, or beautiful. The difference between a man of real genius and a pretender may not appear obvious to common readers, but it is perceptible at once by the least degree of taste. The one is a pure and bright halo, which warms and inspires, while the other is mere smoke, which confuses and blinds; or a factitious and ungenial heat, which is sickly and oppressive. Such is precisely the difference between Mr. Cooper and the generality of his detractors.

"Mercedes" has many faults, most of which consist in awkward anachronisms; but it also possesses beauties which have no parallel in the history of poetic fiction. Where, for instance, can we catch a more perfect understanding of the workings of an exalted imagination, than from the beautifully-drawn characters of the heroine, and her wild, but chivalrous and devoted lover? There is no exaggeration—not a far-fetched sentiment; the diction is transparent and pleasing—the collocation of words the most



natural and simple I remember ever to have seen. Without subscribing fully to the opinion of Mr. Cooper's eulogists as regards detached portions of the work, I will freely confess that I have seldom risen from the perusal of any fiction with a heart more thoroughly grateful for the pleasure I had received. What, then, is wanting to render this book attractive in the eyes of Mr. Cooper's critics? or why have so many insulting paragraphs been penned for the purpose of bringing the author into contempt? To those acquainted with the origin of Mr. Cooper's difficulties with a portion of his countrymen, there needs no explanation. Those self-constituted judges of everything (whether understood by them or not), conceiving that the distinguished author of the "Spy" had been guilty of certain things which proved him to be somewhat too independent for the atmosphere they wished him to breathe, at once projected a glorious scheme to drive him from the fair fields which his own transcendent genius had enriched and fertilized, and to close every avenue against his return to popularity, no matter how splendidly he might write, or how meekly comport himself for the future. This is, doubtless, as it should be; it is supported by the great principle to which society, as it is sometimes constituted, owes its very foundation and existence—the principle of opposition to the laws and the will of God! That society which, by overt acts of cruelty and injustice, daily proclaims to the world that there is no returning from the path of error—that whoever has once strayed from impulse, may as well continue sinning through choice, as no contrition, however sincere or lasting, can ever purchase for the victim of passion either pardon or toleration: that society, I say, which glories in setting at defiance every Christian precept, would not be likely to forgive Mr. Cooper for having dared to expose its foibles, and to animadvert upon its

base propensities. Mr. Cooper had better set fire to his Ephesian temple at once. By continuing to write so well, he will only perpetuate the disgrace of the country which could insult the majesty of his genius by so many outrages upon his name.

Mr. Cooper, however, is not the only writer whose elastic and bounding spirit has been tamed down (if I may use such an expression in speaking of him) by sarcastic strictures and petty persecution. To youthful aspirants especially, the malignant spirit of modern criticism has been injurious in the extreme. Indeed, if there be any circumstance in modern literature which gives me peculiar pain, it is that so many delicate and sensitive minds, full of ardent aspirings after excellence—of romantic notions and sanguine anticipations of fame—are *necessarily* overwhelmed with disappointment in their career. I say necessarily on several accounts. In the first place, there are many men of undoubted genius, who, from the peculiar structure of their minds, cannot mould their conceptions into a popular form; there are those, whose estimate of their own talents, based, perhaps, upon their capability of enjoying with great zest the masterly productions of others, is much too high; others, again, are made the sport of adverse circumstances, or are assailed by harsh and unfeeling criticisms—checks and discouragements, trifling, perhaps, in themselves, but which work deeply on the sensibilities of those against whom they are directed. Besides, there must be much disappointment arising from excessive competition; excellence is comparative, and the number of aspirants eager to attain it very great; the level of mediocrity is therefore raised, and the difficulty of rising above it proportionably increased.

But, whatever may be the causes, it is obvious that, when the cultivation of letters prevails as ex-

tensively as in the present age, the results I have alluded to must follow; and I, for my part, cannot help deeply regretting the blighted hopes of so many pure, sensitive, and enthusiastic minds. The modern critic, however, thinks but lightly of these things. If the volume he is about to review be the work of a young author, he will mark his ambition and his weaknesses with a triumphant self-complacency in his own superior wisdom. Should he belong to the ill-natured tribe, he will take delight in showing with what dexterity he can point out faults concealed from those of duller apprehension; but if he be of the benevolent class, he will be somewhat more forbearing, and conclude, probably, by kindly recommending the author to desist from the profitless pursuit of poetry, if such he has inconsiderately attempted, and direct his attention to the common business of life—as though a transition from the high hopes of literary excellence to some inferior object could be as easily accomplished as advised. He reflects not that there is a mind to which every word that he is inditing will prove a dagger; that, simple as it may seem to him, this lowering of high hopes and abandonment of cherished schemes are destructive of an entire system of happiness, and involve a complete revolution in the moral and intellectual character; nor does he consider that the failure he predicts, which must be inevitable if there be, in fact, but little merit, is an evil requiring no aggravation from insensibility, dull-sighted kindness, or covert malignity. The plea that it is necessary to protect the community from crude and worthless works, and to save literature from debasement by rebuking dulness and unfounded pretension, will avail but little with men of sense, who know that nothing but sterling merit can long support any work in public estimation; and that, as guardians of literature from the contamination of

what is valueless and in bad taste, modern critics are, to say the least, of very doubtful utility.

The first great requisite of a critic at the present day is knowledge—not of Greek, or Latin, or Hebrew, or High Dutch, or Low Dutch, or of History, or Politics, or Geology, or Pantology, or anything of that sort; but that knowledge which consists of a perfect acquaintance with the religious and political creeds of all authors—their rank in society, and at what hour they dine, if they dine at all; for it is quite impossible, in the nature of things, that a man who dines at two o'clock should understand mathematics or humanity as well as he who dines at five. Yet some of these ungenteel ignoramus presume to write books—books, too, which, to the uninitiated, appear as though they really contained something worth reading. But this is all fudge: their authors are wholly incompetent to write a good book; and this incompetency is determinable only by the critics, who have found out at what hour each particular writer dines, in what style he lives, what are his religious and political opinions, and other such infallible criteria of genius. What can be the use of a critic who only forms a judgment of a book from the book itself? Every reader can do that for himself. The value of criticism is, that it points out to ordinary readers that which they cannot find out by their own sagacity.

Next to the knowledge I have described, a critic of these times should possess a vast deal of contempt—first, of honesty; secondly, of his own character; thirdly, of the world's judgment; and, lastly, of human feelings. Honesty is quite beneath a personage of his dignity; and if, by chance, his employer should direct him to praise a good book, he had better let it alone altogether, for fear of spoiling his hand. In the art of modern criticism there is the dishonesty of praise and the dishonesty of

blame, both of which must be thoroughly understood. There is no man living capable of writing a book so well, but a thoroughly disciplined critic shall be able to craftily demolish it; and in like manner, there is no critic properly skilled in his business, who cannot find, in the most stupid book ever written, something to praise; provided, however, that it has been published by the right bookseller. Our critic, in the second place, should not care a straw for his own character; he must have no hesitation to pronounce an opinion of a book in direct opposition to his own judgment; and such opinion once given, he must be prepared to back it with bluster and swagger. Should the world contradict him, he has nothing to do, in the third place, but to contradict the world—to tell it to its face that it is mightily pleased with works that it wholly neglects, and that it never, in fact, reads books which are in everybody's hands. But the perfection of modern criticism is, in the fourth place, to hold human feeling in utter contempt. Had all works a fair sale according to their merits, there would be no chance for one publisher to keep others of his trade out of the market; therefore, to make way for the books of one or two favoured houses, it is necessary to keep down and suppress, as much as possible, all those published by rival establishments. Consequently, whenever a really meritorious work makes its appearance, the author of which has evidently laboured with great diligence, and is anticipating from it both fame and profit, but has unpardonably given it to a wrong house for publication, then it becomes the business of the thorough-paced critic to distort and misrepresent the said work as much as possible: or, if that be too much trouble, he may just slur it over as a thing scarcely worthy of notice—which is, perhaps, after all, the surest way of smothering it.

## CHAPTER XX.

Pleasing Associations in Montgomery.—Start for Charleston.—A Philosophical *Tête-à-tête* with the Mail-bags.—Union of Politics and Literature.—Horrible State of the Roads.—Novel Mode of crossing Rivers.—Stagecoach travelling.—A Dissertation thereon.—Dine in the Woods.—Start on Foot, in advance of the Coach.—Singular Adventure.—Pursuit of a Bird not mentioned in Audubon's Ornithology.—Get lost in the Woods.—Arrive, early in the Morning, in the Creek Nation.—A few Words about Indians.—Rejoin the Coach.—Start for Columbus in a clumsy Wagon.—Jolting on the Road.—A regular Cock of the Wilderness.—Translated into a Stagecoach once more.—Specimen of Georgia Piety.—Madison and Augusta.—Treatment of Stagecoach Travellers at Hotels.—Arrive in Charleston.

AFTER a week's vegetation in the peaceful town of Montgomery, and just as I was beginning to forget all that lay beyond its quiet precincts, I was suddenly roused into action, one morning, by the unexpected intelligence that an extra coach would be started expressly for my accommodation, and that of sundry letter bags that had been waiting, like myself, with exemplary patience, for a chance to proceed on their journey. It is true that the "regular line" had been running for the last three days, or since the abatement of the flood; but so great was the number of passengers who had been detained, like myself, by the breaking up of the roads, and whose names had been registered in advance of mine, that at every departure I had been left behind. The immense quantity of luggage with which I was encumbered had very nearly proved an insurmountable obstacle to my ever proceeding farther; and it was only by paying double fare through Alabama and Georgia that I was permitted to get on at all.

I cannot say that I was positively pleased with be-

ing so suddenly jogged out of that pleasing state of torpitude into which I had been gradually sinking: I was really beginning to love the place I was in, and the good people that dwelt there; it reminded me so strongly of those happiest years of my existence, which flowed on so tranquilly and delightfully in the retirement of a Scottish village. Nay, I had formed attachments even among the inanimate objects around me, these always being the first to arrest my attention and engross my sympathies! The stone fence against which I had leaned in my daily rambles—the leafless branches of a favourite tree, through which I had gazed on the glories of the morning sun, had already become endeared to my heart by the most precious associations! The very streamlet, whose wayward course I had taken delight in watching, as it skipped over its pebbly bed in gladness and peace, seemed to murmur forth vows of eternal friendship, as an inducement for a longer stay! Oh! how happy is the man who loves and studies Nature! she is always sure to smile on him in return. Wherever he roams—to whatever clime he travels, he finds his pleasures as ample as the field of his research. The cultivated hills and vales, with their rich and varied landscape, afford him a placid delight; the sunburned desert fills him with the interest of an unsolved problem; among the bare and rocky steeps of the mountain-chain, he traces the construction of the solid framework of the globe, and hails with rapture the thick and tangled forest, as a storehouse of boundless treasures.

My *tête-à-tête* with the mail-bags was not quite as uninteresting as the sapient reader may imagine, although, to say the truth, I wish they had been sewed a little tighter, as it is not, to my notion, the pleasantest thing in the world to be alone in a mail-coach, with letter-bags before one, ripped open in various places, as was the case in this instance.

But oh ! what scope for reflection the sight of those bags afforded me ! what a theme for the imagination to luxuriate upon ! what a world of human interests lay hid in those silent messengers of fate ! I actually felt myself growing too big for the coach, as, through the mist of fancy, I contemplated the multitude of agonized minds and panting hearts which the contents of those mysterious bags would tranquillize, or relieve, or lacerate ! from the tender epistle, breathing forth, in accents of exquisite pathos, the first acknowledgments of love—the mournful sheet, with its black border, going forth on its errand of woe—the politician's address, pregnant with schemes for self-aggrandizement—the mandate of the man in power, fraught with the ruin or consummation of human hopes—the inexorable creditor's appeal, and the attorney's bill of costs—down to the rejected article, which will plunge some starving author into the very depths of despair : all, all of these, and myriads of others, rose before my bewildered fancy like ghosts conjured from the dark recesses of the earth by the wizard's wand. The greater portion, however, of the contents of these bags consisted of newspapers, showing the widespread popularity of that species of *literature*, and the insatiable thirst for information everywhere felt and manifested, from the heart of the gay city to the most solitary cottage in the wilderness. On this subject I may be permitted to make a few remarks.

It may fairly be assumed that no state of society ever before existed in which literature formed so large and important a part of the business and amusement of life as in the present. A reading public, of which we hear so much, is a phenomenon of modern date, and has been produced by the invention of printing. Neither in Greece nor Rome was there anything like it. Brilliant as was



the literature of those nations, it was mostly of a social kind—there was, comparatively, but little solitary reading. Poets composed verses, and recited them in public; historians read their productions aloud, and philosophers imparted their speculations to their disciples by oral instruction; so that all literature was more or less theatrical—made a sort of public amusement. But since the invention of printing, by means of the cheap and rapid multiplication of books, literature has become more solitary, as well as vastly more extended. The philosopher, the poet, and the historian, who by turns inform, delight, and instruct us, we need not personally see: they are sufficiently visible in their books.

By means of literature, as it exists in modern times, a universal intercourse is maintained among mankind, and, strange as it may appear, it is not the less true, that this very intercourse has made the world less social. It is no longer required that men should meet together for the acquisition of knowledge or for literary amusement. If in ancient times a philosopher or politician travelled into foreign countries to store his mind with philosophical or political truth, as soon as he returned, he gathered around him all who felt an interest in such matters, and narrated to them what he had seen or heard. But now all this is changed: the press receives and diffuses the traveller's narrative and the philosopher's treatise, and it matters not, for all purposes of information, whether we ever see their person or hear their voice.

It is probably, in some degree, owing to this *solitariness* of literature—to this habit of retired and silent reading, that theatrical amusements have comparatively so little attraction, or, rather, that they are no more attended for literary gratification—to enjoy the play of wit and the elucidation of character.

Except during the engagement of some consummate actor, or, I should add, perhaps, of some *splendid danseuse*, the theatre is reduced to little more than a gairish exhibition of decoration and scenery. Almost every novel, too, that is now published, is a kind of drama—comic or tragic, as the case may be: consequently, there is little inducement to visit the theatre for the purpose of seeing a representation of what the printed book can as clearly, if not as impressively, present before the mind's eye. So, though numbers continue to flock to the courts of law, to political meetings, to listen to parliamentary debates, and the like, still they bear no proportion to the numbers who feel an equal interest in these matters, and, notwithstanding, stay away; for books or newspapers supply the place of personal attendance. A judge on the bench, a counsellor at the bar, a member of Congress in the Capitol, an orator at a political meeting, is not speaking merely to those who stand or sit around him, but his voice goes forth to the world—wherever the language in which he speaks is known.

It is so far from being true, as is generally assumed, that politics have intruded themselves into literature, that directly the opposite appears to be the fact, and that literature may be said to have intruded itself into politics. Many things that were formerly only spoken, are now printed, published, advertised, criticised, and bolstered up into the ranks of literature. If two aldermen quarrel about the arrangement of some civic ceremony, or the cooking of a public dinner, forthwith they each publish a pamphlet—statements—replies—rejoinders—vindications, etc., etc. We speak with our pens and hear with our eyes, and are all talking together, though all silent.

Could Aristophanes be made to revisit our earth—be placed in this free country, and told of the deep

interest taken by its people in politics, the old Athenian, I opine, would be apt to shake his head, and incontinently inquire for the evidences of agitation and excitement. But all this would be explained the moment he took a look at one of our newspapers, or, if a twentieth edition of Mr. Webster's speeches should chance to be put into his hands; and he would see that there was indeed abundance of passion and eloquence, but that it was all in print—that our political fermentation was very great, but chiefly—*typographical*.

And is it matter for regret that our politics have assumed this form? Quite the contrary. We should regard it as one of the most blessed changes that could possibly have taken place. What an incalculable amount of noise, and tumult, and both-eration are we saved by it! How quietly do the most waspy politicians now quarrel! Just look at yon two gentlemen, so calm and unruffled, at one of the tables in the Society Reading Rooms, Broadway. Nevertheless, they are abusing each other lustily, and both enjoying all the excitement of conflict, and all the rapture of victory; still, not a blow is struck, not a word spoken, nor so much as a look exchanged! One is reading the "Express," and the other the "Evening Post." At length, with all imaginable courtesy, they exchange papers; and then you may see some slight symptoms of oppugnation: the admirer of the "Express" throws down the "Post" with the utmost contempt, and the reader of the "Post" rejects the "Express" with equal disdain—that is all; and these two doughty gentlemen have enjoyed themselves quite as much as though they had been engaged in mortal combat, or even in inflicting upon each other—a *black eye*. Some silly people complain of providing political reading for the humbler classes. Nonsense! It is the best of all reading.

As for inflaming the mind, why—it acts quite the contrary: it is the most marvellous of all sedatives.

When a man has read an abusive article against the party which he hates, he is satisfied—he has enjoyed a hearty growl, and he feels himself wonderfully relieved. Everybody likes to save himself trouble; and if a political demagogue can rid himself of his spleen by reading a pungent newspaper article at the fireside, how much better it is than having his head broken in a riot. Reading politicians are the quietest people in the world: they have no time for kicking up rows. If, in the times of the York and Lancaster Roses, there had been as many newspapers, pamphlets, and reviews as there are now, there would not have been half the bloodshed. Great rowdies are never great readers. The heads which come periodically in contact with cudgels at our elections, are not the heads most intimate with books and newspapers.

Reading is a neutralizer of violence, but oratory an exciter of it. The ancients manifested their political zeal by multitudinous meetings, and by tearing, ranting, roaring eloquence. Now in eloquence, the feelings of the hearers sympathize with the passions of the speaker. It is not that they are convinced by his reasoning, but inflamed by his noise and his furious gesticulations, just as a dog is excited by being barked at by another. But when we read declamation in cool print, our imagination supplies the place of the orator, and our sympathy is of the same ideal stamp; and having but an imaginary emotion, we are content with an imaginary row. The most flaming politicians nowadays are too much occupied with reading to have time for tearing one another, *bodily*, to pieces; which, however, they would do with the greatest delight imaginable, were they not otherwise so pleasantly engaged.

The truth of the matter, then, seems to be, that, instead of politics having disturbingly encroached upon the quiet precincts of literature, literature has diffused its calming influence over the troubled waters of politics; or, in other words, that we have reading instead of rows.

Now, what a blessed thing it would be (and who knows but the day may soon arrive?) if literature should exercise a similar soothing power among nations, and treatises and pamphlets be made the weapons for settling their disputes, in place of swords and bayonets. Happily, indeed, this improved method seems already to have been introduced between America and England, where it is attended by peculiar advantages, from the community of language; and in no great length of time, England and France will, it is to be hoped, have an equally good understanding of each other's language, so that they also shall be enabled to carry on hostilities in the same pacific style—with lead still—but in types instead of bullets. To indite a good hearty abuse of one's neighbour is almost as good as killing him—has nearly as much excitement, and is certainly followed by results not quite as disagreeable. Such a revolution as this would be evidence indeed of the march of intellect; and are not the signs of the times pointing emphatically to such a consummation?

All ordinary modes of expression would fail to describe the state of the roads after we left Montgomery. In many places, indeed, there was no road at all; every trace of it had been obliterated, and our driver had occasion to call all his skill in navigation into play in order to guide the coach with any tolerable degree of safety. I could hardly have believed it possible for such wide-spread devastation to have been effected in so short a time. In whatever direction the eye was turned, it was

sure to encounter traces of the havoc that had been made ; and where the ground was hilly, and, consequently, more affected by the action of the water, the sweeping torrent had worn cavities so deep, that, as the carriage passed over the narrow and dangerous paths formed in the sides of the ridges, one could not help shuddering at the danger of being upset in such places—a fate, too, which seemed scarcely avoidable. This was but child's play, however, compared with the nervous excitement occasioned by crossing large pools of water every ten minutes, and frequently when the height of the flood had rendered the ordinary method of fording impracticable. To be waked up in the middle of a dark, starless night, and desired to walk over a slippery log of wood carelessly thrown across a boiling stream, as the passengers of the “regular line” were frequently called upon to do, might be considered excellent sport by some persons, but, for my own part, I must candidly confess that I never could perceive the least imaginable degree of pleasure in it. Accordingly, whenever the signal was given for that horrible experiment to be made, I always adhered immoveably to the inside of my “extra ;” and when I heard a splash in the water, and the loud cachinnation which followed it—infalible indications that some “moving accident—by flood,” not “field”—had befallen the adventurous pedestrians—I congratulated myself upon my pertinacity in preferring the remote chance of a broken neck to the more immediate prospect of a sound ducking. I had many alarms, but no positive catastrophe.

Well, after all, I like stagecoaches and stage-coach travelling, provided the first be moderately respectable, and the latter only moderately continued : one hears of life and sees character. The inside of a stagecoach is the high place of selfish-

ness or of real inbred politeness ; the stagecoach breakfast or dinner is a marvellous revealer of secrets, touching temper and disposition ; and if you change your passengers often, and find out the subjects on which they are best informed, you may, in a short journey, pick up the history of half a state, or, at least, make yourself acquainted with its opinions. The most instructive and entertaining companions are not always those the most genteel : such so denominated *par excellence* are extremely apt to be sulky ; or, having led as conventional a life as yourself, have as little free, fresh, racy character—you talk over the gay world, but you learn nothing of the country through which you are travelling. I love plain, homely, and, withal, respectable passengers ; such as presume you to be interested in, and not altogether unacquainted with, the subjects most familiar to themselves—farmers' wives, who get in for ten miles, to " go and see my daughter as is just married," or " my two grandsons as has got the measles ;" and who will give you practical information about the management of a dairy farm, with a slight philippic against the nearest great landholder ; or the " young lady" who has been to visit her friends, some other " young ladies," at the Jackson Inn, where you take her up to ride six miles to her home : she will give you a full complement of small topographical talk, for opposite to her sits a good-looking young farmer, returning from market, and their discourse initiates you into the newest gossip of the nearest market-town ; in half an hour you find out

" Who is born, and who is dead,  
And who is broke, and who is wed."

You discover, too, how parties stand—not on the slave question, but as to whether Mrs. John Smith, an independent widow, will listen to the wooing of Mr. James Brown, a thriving planter. You hear no

word of Clay or Tyler, of Fennimore Cooper, or of Fanny Elssler ; but you learn what kind of sermons the parson preaches, and the true and particular reason why Mr. Hopkins did not go travelling last year. The place of the young lady, when vacated, is more than filled by a passenger from the outside—a tobacco manufacturer from Virginia : he entertains you with a tale of the evil days on which American tobacco has fallen—the competition between the real Havana and American leaf—the rate of profit—the style of finishing—and the reasons why tobacco, though not bread, should be called “the staff of life.” You take leave of your temporary companion with an interest in the tobacco trade that you never felt before. Our tobacco friend is succeeded by a gentleman from an important and busy place, and who is, therefore, more generally informed, and discusses the state of public opinion with all the importance of a new-fledged member of Congress. Wonderful era ! in which constitutions are made as easily as buttons, and a lady can buy an elegant dress for twenty shillings !

And then the scene presented at the general rendezvous just before starting, on a fine spring morning—all animation, noise, and bustle ; porters in their dogskin caps—drivers receiving orders and answering questions—luggage of every imaginable kind and form—trunks, bags, boxes, hampers, bundles, baskets, etc., etc., like men’s minds in these times of locofoco matches and steamboats, all in a state of *transition*—last words between parting friends—puppies barking and officials swearing—no one cool save and except the bookkeeper ; to him it is an every-day affair, and he has become imperturbable from practice. With fancy muslin cravat daintily confined by a mock topaz brooch, and waybill in hand, he is undisputed lord of the ascendant—the sovereign dispenser of seats,



and summary settler of all broils and dissensions ; so that the coachman himself, who becomes a very autocrat on the road, is but a mere satellite to this superior luminary. His commands are peremptory and absolute, and whatever may be people's consequence at home, they find themselves of marvelously little account in the presence of this dignitary : that pretty young lady (despite the pleading of her beautiful eyes and "love's alarms") must have the box, containing the very dress in which she expects to captivate the attorney's clerk, slung under the coach ; and oh ! if the string should *break* !—that choleric old gentleman, with a gouty toe, must make room for the fat lady, with her bundle, umbrella, poke bonnet, and peppermint drops. And now, everything being ready for a start, with the same important personage it rests whether yon passenger, puffing and blowing as he approaches, in the character of "panting time," or rather *past* time, shall save his chance or no. Your stagecoach bookkeeper, like other great men, is apt to feel his "brief authority," and, consequently, to be not over accommodating. What to him are the wishes, interests, or feelings of his passengers ? If for their fare they reach their journey's end (no matter when or how), why, it's all a *fair* business transaction ; and as to their nervous anxiety about coats, cloaks, and umbrellas, he treats it with silent contempt ; nothing short of news of an upset has power to withdraw the pen from his mouth. The whirl about his office is to him quiet as mountain solitude : the arrival and departure of the coach, fraught as it may be with interest to others, stirs not his placid sympathies—it is a mere piece of business—a mechanical routine ; and he himself is little else than a machine—exact and undeviating as the clock in his office—in *keeping time*.

After a ride of seven hours through one of the

wildest countries that the hand of civilization ever had to deal with in making a road, we stopped at a most unpromising-looking edifice, in the midst of the wilderness, where we found, nevertheless, an abundant supply of those choice delicacies, so peculiar to the backwoods, ylceped ham and eggs, graphically spread out on a table of considerable length, evincing a degree of foresightedness on the part of mine host that was laudable in the extreme. Learning that the two coaches would make a halt of at least an hour, I paid my respects in a hasty manner to the aforesaid viands, advised the coachman of my intention to go on ahead on foot, and started accordingly, too happy of an opportunity to escape, even for so short a time, from the confinement I had hitherto been obliged to undergo. How much is lost of nature's grandeur and loveliness to him who catches but a passing view of either as he hurries along in a stagecoach—leaving railroad cars, from which absolutely nothing is seen, out of the question. The beauties of Nature are to be appreciated only by him who courts companionship with her—who pauses to watch her varying lights and shades—to gaze on the wild flower that gems her verdant robe—to listen to her voice, making melody among the leaves—and linking some charm of association or of sentiment with the different objects around him. It was on this occasion that I met one of those wild adventures, which, though attended with much inconvenience and no small danger at the time of their occurrence, afford such delightful materials for retrospection.

The road at this point was unusually free from mud, considering the abundance of swamps in this part of the country; and, except in the immediate vicinity of pools (of which there was no scarcity), the ground was dry, and afforded a pleasant walk. I had proceeded about a mile without encountering

any object particularly worthy of notice, when, all of a sudden, a bird of the size of a dove, singularly graceful in form, and arrayed in the most brilliant colours, alighted on a neighbouring tree, and poured forth strains of melody, sweeter and more copious than ever saluted the ear of forest-wanderer. The effect was magical: I stood riveted to the spot, as if some irresistible spell were upon me. For a moment, every faculty, except those of sight and hearing, seemed to have deserted me. No nightingale I ever listened to in the groves of Southern Europe could compare with it. The English traveller who mendaciously averred that America possessed not a solitary feathered songster deserving of the name, must assuredly have been subject to strange aberrations of mind, if he were not altogether without the sense of hearing, during his visit to this country. He must have been, to say the least, peculiarly unfortunate, or he might have listened to

"Songs of many a tuneful bird,  
Amid their own green valleys heard;  
Warblers whose strains are full of glee,  
Blithe as their own blithe songs can be;  
Who sing their tiny broods to rest  
In the deep forests of the West."

The delightful warbler, whose notes so enchanted my listening ear, is not, I am persuaded, mentioned by any ornithologist. With Wilson's Ornithology I have been familiar almost from my childhood; and Audubon's splendid work on the birds of this country, I have studied with no less attention and delight; but I can find nothing in the volumes of these distinguished naturalists to justify the belief that either of them had ever seen a bird of this species. My opinion is, that this splendid bird must have been a denizen of some foreign clime, or Mr. Audubon, who has left no recesses in the forests of this country unexplored, would have in-

fallibly met with some straggler of the species; but his plates show nothing like it.

The plumage of *my* bird (that is, mine by the right of discovery—which has passed for a good title in more dubious cases) was not only rich in every variety of gorgeous colouring, but rendered singularly beautiful by their distinctness and the manner in which they were disposed. No one colour mingled with another, but each stood out in bold relief from its associated colour, and with the most perfect accuracy of proportion and outline. The breast and back were of a bright scarlet hue; the feathers of the wings were of a deep cerulean tinge, the extremities slightly marked with yellow; the tail was of the most dazzling and perfect green; the neck and head were of the same colour as the wings, with a narrow strip of yellow around the throat, in the shape of a ring, and three straight lines of scarlet on the top of the head. Such a combination of attractive colours, so distinctly defined and so beautifully distributed, was never, perhaps, before found in one of the feathered tenants of the wood; and when to this is added the symmetry of its form, far more graceful and elegant than that of any other bird I ever saw, it may easily be imagined that I gazed upon it with no ordinary degree of admiration and delight.

After throwing itself into every variety of charming attitudes, and carolling sounds harmonious,

“That men and angels might rejoice to hear,”

my winged friend flew into the woods a short distance off, where it for a while appeared to be searching for food among the leaves and scanty herbage, and again mounted to the branch of a tree decorated with the blossoms of spring, and began singing, *à gorge déployée*, as if to entice me to follow it. I mechanically obeyed the impulse; and,

after scrambling over the trunks of fallen pines, which time or tempest had thickly prostrated, I once more found myself near the gayly-plumed warbler. It was remarkable in this bird, that it would permit me to approach it almost near enough to take hold of it, without manifesting the smallest signs of fear, and even listen to the fond terms I addressed to it, with evident marks of pleasure. At first, therefore, I was impressed with the belief that it must be some domestic pet, that had accidentally escaped from its wiry prison; but this opinion I soon abandoned for the more rational one that it had never before been disturbed by the presence of man. The hope that at no great distance I might find its mate, busy, perhaps, with household cares, prompted me to pursue my way through the pathless and tangled forest, and to surrender myself unreservedly to the fascination of the moment. I had been now nearly two hours engaged in this ridiculous chase—groping my way through every variety of obstruction, and wholly unmindful of the time of day, the coach, or my journey. My pretty charmer kept still retreating before me in the most winning manner, chirping, and singing, and coquetting, and generally by such short flights as to keep my curiosity constantly on the stretch. My excitement, in fact, knew no bounds; and the novelty of the pursuit perfectly delighted me. I seemed, at times, to be under the influence of a dream—half in this world and half in the next; or, like some hero in Fingal, spellbound by the soft melody of the spirits of the wood.

All on a sudden, a single plaintive note was heard at no great distance, and my enchanter flew in that direction with more than its wonted swiftness. That note proceeded, no doubt, from its mate, and it was evidently uttered in a tone of reproach, short and thrilling, indicating either grief at the long absence

of its companion, or alarm lest some fatal accident might have occasioned it. I know the language of birds and animals well ; and, though circumscribed, it is perfectly understood among themselves. Thus, even the silly barn-door fowl, when the falcon approaches, by a single note of alarm makes all her chicks hide in a moment. She tells you, too, when she has laid her egg ; and, lest the important event should not be sufficiently known, shrill chanticleer " takes up the wondrous tale," and proclaims it at the top of his lungs.

Evening was gathering her shades apace : my bird was fairly out of sight before I could extricate myself from a quagmire into which I had plunged in my eagerness to note its whereabouts. I never beheld it more ; and, as I awoke from my revery, in the bitterness of disappointment I exclaimed after it :

Go shake thy plume—the world is free  
Before thee—warbler, fly !  
Bless'd by a sunbeam and by me,  
Bird of my heart—good-by !

It was not till this moment that I became fully aware of the awkwardness of my situation. The forest was becoming denser and darker every minute ; the eye could discern nothing but the trunks of trees in endless succession, presenting to my mind, in their far-stretching files, closer and closer as they became more distant, the idea of infinity. It was in vain to seek for an outlet from these wilds in the midst of such darkness, for I must have been three miles, at least, from any point of the road. Now and then, to be sure, I caught a glimpse of a light spot ; but after proceeding towards it with great difficulty, through nettles, briers, and mud, I found nothing but an opening made by a multitude of prostrated pines. Deeming it, at length, fruitless to attempt getting out of the forest for the present, I qui-

etly sat down to reflect a while amid this solitude of Nature, where silence reigned unbroken, save where the wind swayed the tops or sighed through the branches of the trees, making the wide wood harmonious with soft sounds, as if each leaf were vocal, and addressing itself to its answering fellows.

It was very fortunate that, when I started, I had taken my large Spanish cloak with me ; for the night was damp and chilly, and visions of cramps and rheumatisms danced in dismal shapes before my excited imagination. I was in the midst of anything but an Elysian retreat : it was far more like the shades of death, amid which a man might be content to rest in his last sleep. Clouds were beginning to start up from the northwestern horizon ; these slowly rose to the upper regions of the sky, which was then of a dingy copper colour tinged with red. I endeavoured hastily to make for myself a shelter of boughs, in the best manner I could ; but, with all my philosophy, I felt *streaked* enough.

At last the moon became visible, glittering in the eastern horizon, her silver beams, as they struggled through the fleecy mist, casting a faint and dubious light upon the objects around me. But, ere long, the whole wilderness was lit up with her increasing splendour, and presented a scene replete with grandeur. Everything around was wrapped in deepest silence, as though Nature herself were gazing in mute admiration upon the beautiful spectacle. Anon a solitary raven perched on a withered bough, and turning to the luminary of night, broke forth with its hoarse croaking in praise of the Great Author of Nature ! Instantly I started to my feet, and after a moment's reflection, struck out in a northerly direction, which, after five hours' incessant toil, brought me to an open space not far from the roadside. Here a new and no less perplexing difficulty presented itself. Was this the right road ? or had

I overshot my mark or strayed wide of my reckoning? As I was utterly at a loss, any serious speculation on the subject was manifestly useless; and so, trusting to Providence, I continued my route through the forest—tall pines, of every age and figure, stretching away in the distance; some feathered with green branches to the very ground, and others stripped and dismal, and in shapes that might pass for Lapland idols. After pursuing my weary way for three hours longer, during which no trace of human existence had appeared, I suddenly discovered a wreath of smoke, and presently the wretched hut from whence it issued, standing in the centre of a small straggling village: it was the very spot where, but a few short years before, were the headquarters of the Creek nation.

Yes, here was the dwelling-place of a valiant race, who, before the pale faces came, were, in the figurative language of Black Hawk, "happy as the buffalo on the plains," but now homeless and wretched as the prowling wolf of the prairie. What sorrowful reflections crowd upon the mind as one contemplates the melancholy fate of this outcast and persecuted people! The North American Indian has always appeared to me more like a character of romance than of real life. The dignity of his personal aspect and bearing—his earnest and poetic eloquence—his stern power of endurance, and his shadowy but not degraded faith in one great all-ruling Spirit, combine to place him, in my estimation, high above the wild man (I will not call him savage) of any other clime or country; whether I meet him in fiction or in history, there is something about him that is irresistibly fascinating. I never can reflect upon the present forlorn condition of this much-wronged race, driven by strangers from their own beautiful heritage—degraded from free hunters of the forest to a feeble band of abject de-



pendants—debased by all the vices of civilized life, and receiving none of its benefits—without a feeling of painful sympathy, mingled with the deepest indignation.

It was just five o'clock when I reached the village; the inmates of the aforesaid cabin, as well as of all the other houses in the place, were still fast asleep. An aged man, his white locks neatly tucked up under a red nightcap, was the only person I succeeded in rousing from his slumbers, greatly, no doubt, to his discomfort and annoyance. From him I received the gratifying information that the coach had stopped at this very village for the night, and was directed to a shed where I should find it. Unwilling to disturb any of my fellow-travellers before it was time to set out again on our journey, I crept quietly into the vehicle, where I endeavoured to compose myself as well as I could, and to sleep off the impressions of my night's adventure. My dreams of repose, however, were of short duration: for at seven o'clock the coachman began rummaging among the mail-bags, when, on seeing me snugly ensconced in my old corner, he started back with a look of amazement more easy to be imagined than described. Having satisfied him on the subject of my identity, and convinced him that the object he was incredulously inspecting was, in truth, no apparition, but his veritable passenger in *propria persona*, we both repaired to the breakfast-table, where such a multiplicity of questions was poured in upon me, and so many answers impatiently demanded, that I had very little chance of attending to the claims of an appetite rendered clamorous beyond all former precedent by the adventures of the night.

Another change of scene: rickety, springless wagons, of the clumsiest and most unwieldy description, substituted for the coaches; and the passengers by the regular line having dispersed, after

breakfast, to their several homes, one only remained to share with me the tortures that our new vehicle was prepared to inflict. The Inquisition never invented anything half as excruciating. By the time we reached Columbus I had not a sound bone in my body, and it was by the greatest miracle in the world that the old machine held together. What made my sufferings more intolerable was the provoking coolness of my travelling companion, who seemed so accustomed to this terrible ordeal, that he didn't mind it a straw, and laughed like a madman all the way. He was one of your regular cocks-of-the-wood, with a girdle stuffed with Bowie-knives, and—a full colonel, of course. The stories he related to me of the battles he had fought with that precious weapon—the wounds he had received, and the astonishing cures that had been performed upon him, would have made the redoubtable Crockett himself open his eyes wide. He was, nevertheless, a most amusing companion, and I freely forgive him the ebullition of spleen to which he gave vent because I declined sleeping in the same bed with him, as a fair offset against the entertainment he afforded me by his loquacious humour: it was an affront, however, which he, for a while, seemed disposed to resent in a rather serious way.

From Columbus we again had the luxury of a coach—a slow ride through interminable woods, over rickety roads. The company inside was better than usual, with the exception, however, of one individual, who kept bobbing his head about as though it didn't belong to him, resting, at times, that ponderous appendage unceremoniously on my shoulders—a circumstance which certainly did not add much to my comfort. In the course of the day we met with a curious specimen of humanity, not unworthy a passing notice. Among our passengers there was a lady who had been troubled with spasmodic

pains for several hours, and it was generally supposed that a little weak brandy and water would relieve her. For this purpose we stopped at a house combining the multifarious attractions of grocery-store, thread and needle store, haberdashery, chinawares, liquors—in short, every article either of consumption or apparel, from the best chewing tobacco down to the most fashionable hats ever manufactured by Leary or St. John. It being Sunday, the family had gone from home, and left a lad of seventeen to take care of the premises. This promising youth made his appearance at the door, and, on being asked if he had any brandy in the house, nodded assent, and retired, as we supposed, to bring some. After waiting patiently for more than ten minutes without being favoured by his re-appearance, we halloed to him by every imaginable name of which he could be possessed, but received no answer. The coachman at length waxing impatient, I ventured into the house : after a fruitless search of five minutes, I finally discovered the delinquent, crouched behind a pile of earthenware, where, it seemed, he had hid himself for the purpose of avoiding our importunities. His excuse was, that his father's landlord had forbidden him to sell liquor on Sunday under any circumstances whatever, and that the least infringement of that rule would deprive him of his lease. I described to him the sufferings of the lady in the most touching manner of which I was capable, but all in vain : his rustic bosom was impenetrable to the soft influence of pity. I then made an effort to compound with his conscience by proposing to receive the liquor as a gift ; but the distinction between giving and selling was unhappily too abstruse for his comprehension. He stared at me with that peculiar stupidity of expression which indicates low cunning, but spoke not a word ; and the result was,

that we had to proceed on our way without being able to procure even a glass of cold water.

It was late before we reached Madison; and as we left it at daylight in the cars for Augusta, I have nothing to say about that place. On arriving at Augusta, a town of considerable importance, I had more time to look about me: still the reader shall be spared a particular description of the many things which struck me as being calculated to render that town a desirable place of residence. One thing, however, I cannot forbear mentioning—as I particularly noticed it here as well as elsewhere in the interior of the country—and that is the want of civility and attention to travellers. Doubtless, there is abundance of good hotels, and many of them full of good things; but then you must not travel in a stagecoach; or, if you do, you must be prepared to forego all thoughts of luxury, or even of comfort. You are as much labelled “freight” as your luggage, and treated with about the same ceremony—with this advantage in favour of the luggage, that it has, happily, no consciousness of indignities which you cannot help feeling to the very finger ends. The play begins by ushering you from the common vehicle into the common room. If you propose stopping for a day or two, you are offered the choice of a single-bedded room with a skylight, or a double-bedded one looking out on the pig-sties and the stable-yard. From these you cannot fail of both seeing and hearing something more of human nature than will be altogether agreeable to you, great an admirer as you may be of that useful study. Or, perhaps, the apartment assigned you overlooks a court filled with the ghosts of departed marigolds and sunflowers, and intersected by a passage leading no one knows whence to no one knows where—a thoroughfare so completely under your own window, that you cannot

help hearing all that is said and seeing all that is done—the mistress scolding, servants bawling, and children crying. Reflection affords you no comfort: the miserable contrast but the more strongly reminds you of the comforts you have left behind. Your mind is flooded with pleasing remembrances that only aggravate your present state; every sense becomes a separate memory: you revisit, in imagination, the lovely shades you have left—try to regale yourself with the sweet flowers of yesterday—to hear the soft voices that have no echo but in your heart—to grasp the friendly hand that you have, perhaps, held for the last time. I am fully persuaded that, put on what airs of state or affectation of courtesy you may, it is all in vain to look for good accommodations at any hotel in these states if it be your misfortune to arrive in a stage-coach. My advice to you, therefore, gentle traveller, is, to put your feelings—your fancies—your sentiment—your memory—your dignity—in short, everything that can remind you, directly or indirectly, of happier days—all in your pocket (if you have one)—hear the noises without fretting—see the sights coolly—brook the slights, and—go to bed.

On the sixth day of April I reached Charleston, where I put up at Stewart's hotel, decidedly one of the best and most comfortable houses I ever stopped at, notwithstanding the above eloquent philippic denouncing all houses of entertainment.

## CHAPTER. XXI.

Gloomy Prospects.—The Charleston Theatre on the Eve of Closing.—State of the Drama in Charleston.—Requisites for a Manager.—The spurious System of Managing.—Deficiencies of Mr. Abbott's Management.—State of Society in Charleston.—The Mercantile Class.—Scotchmen and their Character.—Reminiscence of Prince Charles Edward—Irish Residents and their Character.—Sketch of the Literati of Charleston.—Portrait of Mr. Grand, a conspicuous Personage.—Aristocracy of Charleston.—Their Pretensions.—A retrospective Glance at our common Ancestors.—Peculiarities of the South-Carolina Aristocracy.—Causes of Mr. Abbott's Failures in Charleston.

AFTER all my hurry and anxiety—my sacrifices of time, pleasure, money, and a certain invaluable article called temper, in order to redeem my pledge to Mr. Abbott, I arrived in Charleston on the very eve of the closing of the theatre—Hibernially speaking, just in time to be too late. The season had been a disastrous one both to manager and actors, the best of whom, weary of playing to empty seats and receiving no salaries, had already left for some more favourable scene of action. Nowhere has the drama suffered so complete a prostration as in Charleston; and yet there is hardly a city in the Union where a well-conducted theatre would stand a better chance of encouragement and success. The theatre itself is a beautiful building, and well suited to a people susceptible of refined impressions, and capable of appreciating whatever is elegant in taste or imposing in classical decorations. But the company, with very few exceptions, was made up of the most dismal materials, and the pieces produced belonged, for the most part, to the Satanic and alcoholic school of dramatic composition, and which, after the excitement of a first representation, are always sure to drag their slow length along—utterly

neglected by those who attend theatrical exhibitions for mental gratification, and not for mere idle pastime. But so it is, and ever has been, with the stage, where its fortunes have once risen to a great height. It might seem as though, like empire, the legitimate drama were destined never to flourish in the same region a second time ; and that, having once reached its zenith, it hastens to its sitting, and sinks never to rise again. The indignant Athenian complained that his degenerate countrymen abandoned to Marionettes the theatre where the plays of Euripides had wrought the audience to the noblest enthusiasm, and that they were base enough to raise a statue to a ventriloquist by the side of *Æschylus*.

The decline of the drama in Charleston is so intimately connected with managerial follies and imprudences, that I cannot forbear, however reluctantly I may approach the subject, making a few remarks in relation to it. It is one of the greatest curses of the theatrical profession, that the management of a dramatic establishment so frequently falls into the hands of individuals, to whom the interests of the drama and the dignity of the profession are but so much empty breath, signifying nothing. No man, in my opinion, should be intrusted with the management of a respectable theatre without being remarkable for probity of character, suavity of manners, morality of conduct, critical discrimination, knowledge of the world and of letters, and a correct understanding of the duties and responsibilities of his station. Such a man would enter upon the discharge of his duties with the secret consciousness that he had it in his power to lead public taste, and would never insult the good sense of a community by the production of obscene horrors and melodramatic bombast. He would be uniformly just and urbane towards his actors, punctual in the fulfilment

of all his contracts, and ever ready to honour merit wherever he should find it, instead of being, as is, unhappily, too often the case, its depreciator and contemner. He would carefully husband his resources in seasons of prosperity, that his company might never be exposed to suffering from any temporary decline of patronage. He would conduct himself, in short, as though he were merely the *guardian* of the public money—the depository of an important trust, of which it behooved him to be able to give an honest and satisfactory account.

Nothing is more common in this country than to see a vender of lottery-tickets or a broken-down stock-jobber, fresh from the baleful atmosphere of their respective vocations, suddenly stepping into the management of a theatre, and introducing into it all that meanness of soul, contractedness of feeling, and cunningness of purpose, by which they were characterized in their previous occupations. The motto of such men is, "A short life and a merry one." No matter what may be the influx of patronage, or how productive the season may have been, let there be but one week of stagnancy in the business of the establishment, and the actors are politely informed, when salary day arrives, that the treasury is not in funds, and that, unless the business should improve forthwith, they will have to be placed on two thirds pay. This infamous system of swindling (for by no gentler name can it be called) is carried on much more extensively than the world is generally aware of, and that, not unfrequently, by men reputed to be honourable and just. The money is surreptitiously abstracted and applied to purposes of wild speculation, or expended for supplying some costly extravagances of the manager's convivial table. The actor either gets dispirited and neglects his business, or quits the establishment altogether. Hence the encroachment of



spectacles, and the consequent influx of third-rate mediocrity—the unceasing paralogisms in the penny papers—the slovenliness exhibited behind the scenes—the ribald talk and want of decorum in the green-room, and the apathy, the utter indifference and moral lethargy into which all thinking men are thrown in regard to the prospects or prosperity of the stage.

Were it the good fortune of the theatre of Charleston to fall into the hands of such men as James H. Caldwell or Thomas S. Hamblin, or of any individual possessing a tithe of the tact and capacity for business for which those two gentlemen are so eminently distinguished, I am persuaded that an uninterrupted career of prosperity would be the result. But Mr. Abbott, although possessed of many excellent qualities considered indispensable to the proper conducting of a theatre, such as sterling histrionic abilities, gentlemanly deportment, and intense love for his profession, is the last man to whom the reins of management could be safely intrusted. Want of judgment, improvidence, and inconstancy of purpose are the besetting sins of his character, and go far towards neutralizing the favourable impressions which he never fails to make by his amiableness of temperament, and richness and versatility of humour. The first prevents him from ever adhering firmly to any settled course of action; the second renders him mindful only of the present and reckless of the future; and the last has been productive of irreparable mischief both to himself and to the theatre, as I shall briefly endeavour to show.

There is no city in the Union where the gradations in the great social system are so distinctly marked as in Charleston; each class seems to shun the other as a moral leprosy; there is less amalgamation of orders than anywhere else. Without at-

tempting to trace all the minute ramifications into which the social tree has branched out, I shall classify the white population into three great families or separate communities, the mercantile, the literary, and the aristocratic.

The most numerous, as well as the most important, is the mercantile class; and it is chiefly to this class that a stranger must look for hospitality and the exercise of kindness. By the term *mercantile* I mean all those engaged in trade, from the extensive cotton broker to the retail dealer in pickled herrings and brown sugar. The greatest part are Scotchmen, or the descendants of Scotchmen, many of whom claim consanguinity with some of the proudest families in their father-land. It was truly refreshing to my feelings, while sitting at the table of some of these veteran sons of Caledonia, to hear them speak with youthful enthusiasm of the invasion of Charles Edward—the generous devotion of his followers, and the spirit of romantic honour, which, in 1745, converted Scotland into a jousting-field of pure and lofty chivalry. We Americans of eighteen hundred and forty-two laugh immoderately at the spirit of fantastic honour which led our ancestors to lay down life and land, children and country, at the feet of that colossal shadow which men call *Legitimacy*. An idea of the ridiculous mingles with our admiration as we think of their romantic devotion to the cause of an individual, whose only claim to their homage rested on the fact, that his father had been driven from a throne which he was at once too base and too foolish to retain. We can form some conception of the feelings which could prompt a gallant knight to peril life and limb in the service of a wandering damsel of that olden time, when wandering damsels were heroines, as well of history as of romance; but we find it not so easy to comprehend the senti-

ment which could set a whole kingdom in a blaze, because a wandering *prince* chose to throw himself upon its shores, proclaiming to all its people, "You and yours are mine—your country is my patrimonial estate, and yourselves go with it, as the other stock upon the soil!" The compact between governors and the governed is quite different in our time; or, rather, there is a compact now where there formerly was none. Even in France, where Legitimacy is making an effort to raise her tattered banner among the ruins of the revolution, the attempt partakes largely of the ridiculous, and the struggle is carried on more with *bons-mots* and *pasquinades* than with lances and muskets. There, cutting jokes have taken the place of keen-edged sabres—taunts and sneers are let fly instead of bullets—flashes of wit have extinguished flashes of gunpowder—and roars of laughter silenced the thunder of artillery. All this is doubtless as it should be; but, in order to estimate fairly the characters of different periods, it is necessary to view them through the medium of their own times, and not of ours. In the time of the fugitive prince, for instance, whose name is here introduced, legitimacy was a subject far too serious for merriment. The struggle between the new and old ideas was then unsettled in men's minds; and public opinion, that mighty *Iconoclast*, trembled at its own temerity as it levelled its blows at the ancient idols of the world. We, the descendants of that generation, have been trained in the new political school; and, therefore, should not despise the faith inculcated on our fathers. In their day, loyalty was a principle which it required all the efforts of philosophy combined with fanaticism to combat and overcome; it was interwoven, almost inextricably, with everything that was beautiful to the imagination or holy to the heart—it was identified with the venerable name of religion—

with the pride of birth—with the fidelity of the soldier—with the honour of the gentleman. Loyalty was to the heart what religion is to the soul; and the outward and visible image of its worship was the *King*.

In the ranks of the mercantile class of Charleston there is found, also, a plentiful sprinkling of Irishmen—men distinguished for loftiness of character, and those ennobling qualities of heart and mind which have ever been allowed, by anti-Hibernian writers themselves, to constitute the distinctive features of the Irish character. It is always matter of inexpressible gratification to me to see Irishmen of education and enterprise occupying honourable stations in whatever country or clime they chance to settle. Thus, from change of climate, animals may change their colours or cast their fur—birds moult their plumage or acquire a thicker feathery coat—fishes and reptiles thrive or die—and the human being improve in health or languish from disease; while the mind, the passions, the intelligence in the latter remain the same, slightly modified by the condition of the body, but in every quality which distinguishes, and every pulse which governs him; unaltered and unalterable. I should not forget to mention, that the Irish residents of Charleston have, in the true spirit of philanthropy, established a fund among themselves for the especial relief of their countrymen, of whatever condition, whenever sickness or distress overtakes them. This illustration of the characteristic benevolence of the Irish carries out what Lady Morgan says of them in one of her novels—that the Irish heart, when tried, shines with redeeming brightness.

I come now to speak of the literary class—an order of savans *sui generis*, and altogether peculiar to Charleston—differing from every learned body since the days of Noah, though possibly not without some *antediluvian* prototype. Their pretensions

sions to the distinction that they claim are not so much founded on positive acquirements, as upon a certain tact in *looking* wise. They are, for the most part, people with but one idea, and that, somehow or other, always happens to relate to themselves. Thus, every topic they introduce has a direct personal application. There is A., who is perpetually boasting of his skill in fattening ducks or curing hams. B. thinks of nothing but his superlative dignity as a man of science; while Mrs. B.'s all-absorbing subject is, that matrimony and happiness are not precisely *synonymous*. C. has an idea that no man but himself ever had any true conception of the combination of harmonic sounds; and Dr. D.'s idea is, that Mrs. D. is the wife of a wonderfully clever man. Lawyer E. has, to be sure, no very clear notion of what his greatness consists in; but is pretty well persuaded that there is nobody that comes up to him in giving lectures. There is the great literary *Anthropophagos* F., who looks upon himself as the only legitimate essayist of this or any other age, and that he is, withal, a very ill-used man. But why dwell longer upon distinguished individuals in this shining catalogue? suffice it to say, that no city but Charleston could ever boast of such a galaxy of "bright particular stars." The members of this fraternity are always to be found at places of genteel public resort, and in a body by themselves—"the observed of all observers,"—from their loud talking, and the special delight they seem to take in finding fault with the actors or the play: at public lectures, too, they are particularly watchful to detect a false enunciation or a solecism in language. As their curious propensities lead them to associate only with their own species, of course they keep aloof from all contact with the less erudite portions of the community; and what is not a little remarkable is, the latter bear the slight with utter indifference.

The most prominent individual among these luminaries of Charleston is Mr. GRAND—may I beg the reader to have the goodness to look serious and sit upright in his chair, while I introduce to his special notice and attention this celebrated pink of intellectual perfection. I have called him Mr. Grand for convenience' sake; his fellow-citizens usually designate him by a much loftier title: that, however, is nothing to our present purpose. In the first place, gentle reader, I beg you to observe his portly figure—he himself sometimes calls it *portable*—but smile not at this; he belongs to the *literati*, and doubtless has some good etymological reason for this variation of the word. You think, perhaps, that he has his Sunday clothes on? but don't be too hasty: he dresses as well as this every day of his life. Observe how nicely he turns out his toes! and how naturally! still he seems quite unconscious of the innate gracefulness of his person. Now take a look at his face: you need not be afraid; it is none of your Medusa visages to frighten people into stone: quite the contrary: see how calm it is! how placid and composed! what a fine expanse of forehead! Just notice the curl of the upper lip! perhaps you don't know the signification of this? then I will tell you. It signifies that Mr. Grand is the greatest man in Charleston. "Is he mayor of the city?" Bah! what a question! He did serve in that office, to be sure, some years ago, before so many upstarts were thrusting themselves into public stations, robbing rank of its dignity. "Is he a common-councilman then?" No: neither common-councilman nor alderman; nor has he the slightest ambition to be either. He was solicited last year to offer himself for the latter post, but declined. Aldermen and common-councilmen are not what they used to be. Mr. Grand desires no such vulgar distinction—he belongs to the *élite*: he

takes the lead in all literary and scientific matters ; his voice is heard in every committee-room, and his interest anxiously sought for by all persons aspiring to give public entertainments. He is, besides, a highly meritorious citizen, and has acquired his importance solely by his talents and multifarious acquirements. A visit he made to Europe several years ago brought out all the latent graces of his mind, and ever since he has been the "observed of all observers." This, Mr. Grand is very properly aware of, and it dilates him wonderfully ; the rotundity of his proportions may be in a great measure ascribed to it. His wisdom has been observed to grow with his consequence, and his self-complacency to be in direct proportion to either.

Mr. Grand, too, is a no less important personage in the vestry ; he takes special care that the parish is not imposed upon. He's not a man of many words, but still, notwithstanding his brevity, a very powerful orator. Demosthenes himself did not address the Athenians with more surprising effect than does Mr. Grand the inhabitants of his parish in vestry assembled. The sum and substance of his eloquence may be found in this single sentence, "Give me leave to observe, gentlemen"—and the gentlemen always very cheerfully grant him this leave, because he is a good man, and an influential man, and invariably carries his left hand in his breeches pocket. It has been observed that Mr. Grand once consented to be made mayor of the city—happily for his fame, and happily for the organ of his church, and for the front of the organ-gallery ; for, in the days of his mayoralty, and chiefly through his efforts, and partly at his expense, the pipes of the aforesaid organ were regilded, and the front of the gallery was repaired and beautified ; the little mahogany cherubs were made to look as good as new, if not even better, as large as life, and far more natural ; for all the little chaps

and dents that had been made in their eyes, cheeks, noses, and wings by the mischievous urchins of the charity-school, were nicely filled with putty and covered over with fresh varnish. But, to crown all, the name of Mr. Grand, as mayor of the city at the time these great embellishments were made, has been immortalized in gilt letters, conspicuously displayed, to be read by the congregation every Sunday. When the great work was finished, he stood admiringly gazing upon it for hours together, and was heard several times exultingly to exclaim,

"Exegi monumentum ære perennius."

Mr. Grand is also a great man at the club—the literary club, of course. It is true that the persons there congregating are not particularly distinguished for literary attainments; but there is no small satisfaction in being a great man even among little ones. In this respect he resembles Julius Cæsar; for, as the latter preferred being the first man in a village to playing second fiddle in Rome itself, so would our friend rather be first man at the club, than second; though in the proudest assembly in Christendom. Indeed, what is the use of greatness if it be not felt and appreciated? and Mr. Grand feels his even to his finger ends. His entrance into the clubroom is greeted with as profound a reverence as that of the pedagogue into his schoolroom. All eyes are turned upon him, and at his approach all talk is suspended. Here his opinions have the force of law; and as he is looked upon, in point of knowledge, as a perfect walking cyclopædia, and an infallible critic in all matters connected with music, the fine arts, and the drama, his verdict upon everything new appearing in any one of these departments, always produces a profound sensation. Wo to the actor, singer, or artist who fails to cultivate the good graces of Mr. Grand! There are timid



people, who talk about the progress of the democratic feeling—the march of levelling principles—the abated reverence paid to rank ; but let them go to the literary club on an evening when Mr. Grand is present, and they will be relieved of all their fears. It will do their hearts good to see the deference *here paid* to rank.

Mr. Grand is a great man at church on Sundays. You should see him advancing up the middle aisle, with Mrs. Grand leaning on his arm, and the Misses Grand and the Masters Grand following in solemn procession. There are two sentiments highly conducive to piety, which are very strikingly manifest in the countenances of Mr. Grand and his family, and these are gratitude and contentment ; for they seem to be surpassingly well satisfied with themselves, and most grateful for the homage which the eyes of the congregation are paying to the dignity of their demeanour and the splendour of their attire. Mr. Grand is, in fact, almost as great a man at church as at the club. He has decidedly the best pew ; and it is, beyond compare, the best fitted up—having such comfortable cushions and neat matting, and such handsome prayer-books ! With all these means and appurtenances of devotion, he looks, of course, exceedingly devout, and makes all the responses audibly and in order. If, however, his eye is now and then seen wandering, let it not be supposed, for a moment, that he is gazing about from mere curiosity ; for, though he has his own proper devotions to attend to, he has also to keep an eye upon divers of the parishioners—to see that the children of the charity-school behave as they ought, and that the master and mistress of the school are duly vigilant over those intrusted to their care. Mr. Grand is never unmindful of his greatness, even when he comes to church to confess his littleness.

I have only farther to remark, that Mr. Grand is a very great man at the bank, where he holds an important situation, and where he is always full of bustle, business, consequence, and dignity, but not without due condescension ; for he condescends to wear a *white apron*, not to hide a shabby, but to save a handsome dress. Loud is his voice and imperative his demeanour among the subalterns by whom he is surrounded : he sits perched on a high stool, at a high mahogany desk, decorated and garnished with brass nails—wears his hat like a crown and holds his pen like a sceptre. He looks about him with glowing delight and an almost bursting dignity, as though he were undisputed monarch of all he surveys—from the ceiling to the floor. There is but one drawback on Mr. Grand's happiness in this his most dignified sphere of action—it is the constant perversion of Uncle Sam's English, and the gross violations of the rules of orthœpy to which he is doomed to listen. Indeed, so sensitive is he on this point, that he has actually threatened to resign his situation unless a certain clerk near his elbow, who continually tortures the tympanum of his ear with barbarous provincialisms, be forthwith removed. Mr. Grand's antipathy to improper emphases is such, that no public speaker can hope to escape his severest censure if he happens, through negligence or any other cause, to violate a single rule laid down by Walker. With him, matter is nothing—sound everything. The very imp who waits at his table—an animated lump of charcoal between seven and eight years old—has a miserable existence of it from constant terror of the rod, lest his Ethiopian instinct should betray him into some grammatical blunder in the presence of strangers. Mr. Grand's eccentricities, however, are but as a grain of sand to the desert compared with the truly imperial qualities of his character !

The aristocracy of South Carolina is famed all over the world for gentility of blood, high descent, and chivalrous bearing. The Pringles, the Smythes, the Middletons, the Hutchinsons, and a host of others, are all names favourably known in the early history of the South, and many of them claim cousinage even with the Phœnicians and the Pre-Adamites. Like the Welsh, who—little blame to them—are not accustomed to think disparagingly of themselves in any respect, these South Carolinians are sturdy sticklers for any theory which gives them remote and gentlemanly descent, and leaves them in possession of the honours of peopling half the civilized world with their own hands (as Sir Callaghan O'Brallaghan has it), or, at least, with those of their common ancestors. Pens may be flourished and ink made to flow—volumes heaped on volumes—facts commented into obscurity and difficult points rendered hopelessly insoluble by over-analysis; yet all this, I fear, will be still insufficient to settle the pretensions of these gentry to antiquity of descent.

Let not the reader imagine, from what I have said, that I am disposed to treat with ridicule the pretensions of birth; far from it; for I confess to a considerable weakness on that point myself: and shallow-hearted must that man be who does not feel a deep interest in the early history of his own race. For my own part, I can find no pleasanter study than to trace the origin, progress, and varied fortunes of an ancient and illustrious family. In these inquiries, what a picturesque and intensely interesting pageant of the olden times passes in review before us. First uprises the rude warrior of the eleventh century, hewing out with his ponderous battle-axe his road to wealth and renown—erecting towers, founding abbeys—at length exchanging the helmet for the cowl, and, finally, in rude

pomp laid to rest beneath the proud structure his munificence had reared. Then, the baron of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries—his stern, martial character, just beginning to be softened by the dawning influences of chivalry—advancing his banner andighting his war-steed, with generous devotion, to succour “that sweet land over the sea,” as Villehardouin calls it; and at last, returning from his long and wearisome journey, distributing gifts to minstrels; releasing Christian captives; presenting the precious “golde baudekin,” or some priceless cup of Saracen workmanship, at the shrine where his fathers knelt to pray, and adding to the ancestral coat a cross, or crescent, or, perhaps, the simple escallop-shell—memorial of his eventful pilgrimage. Next, with broidered scarf and plumed helm, the “veray parfaite gentil knyghte” of the brilliant era of the third Edward, starts up before us—warrior indeed, but far removed, in spirit and in feeling, from the rude founder of the family name, as his richly-inlaid plate armour, and keen, polished sword, differ from the Norseman’s coarse black mail and huge unwieldy mace—warrior indeed, as Cressy and Poitiers can tell, but statesman and courtier too—skilful to touch the harp as to poise the lance, and deemed worthy of record in that golden book of chivalry, the Chronicles of Sir John Froissart. And then, with robes stiff with cloth of gold, and heavily-broidered tabard, the noble of the fifteenth century passes by—grave, formal, statesman-like, fond of the gorgeous ceremonials of chivalry, but uninfluenced by its poetic spirit—pricking forth with a goodly array of esquires and yeomen, not to advance the proud claims of his lady’s beauty, but to purchase the services of “a thousande fotemenne, halfe to be handgunnes and arquebusses;” or, by profuse offers of secret service money, to persuade some petty Continental prince to break

off alliance with his cousin of France, and transfer his valuable aid to England. But a change is now coming over the face of Europe, and clouds and storms usher in the dawning of modern days : fierce, daring, and unprincipled, or shrewd, far-reaching, and profound, uprises the noble of the Reformation, playing, amid the shock of contending principles and the wreck of hallowed institutions, an eager and desperate game, in the which, if loser, his head will pay the forfeit, but if gainer, he will rise still higher in dignity and rank, and add half a county to his family estate.

Next comes the statesman of the Elizabethan period : now charged with some weighty mission to overreach Spain, or to stultify the crafty Guise or the cunning De Medici—then riding post-haste after midnight with unicorn's horn for my Lord Burleigh, or with intelligence of suspected witchcrafts to the council—now setting forth to maintain the Protestant cause on the plains of Flanders—and now, in suit of gilt armour and with rose-coloured scarf, advancing in the tiltyard the claims of “divine Parthenia” to be “the ladie and sovran of Beauty.” And next arises the stern and haughty noble of the spirit-stirring times of the Parliament, advancing his ancestral banner with chivalrous devotion to the waning fortunes of “Church and King ;” or, with equal devotion, condemning his family plate to the crucible for the support of the “good cause,” and uplifting his sword to maintain it on the field. And then—how mighty the change !—comes the spiritless nobleman of the Restoration—the manufacturer or the victim of plots the most extravagant that folly ever imagined or cowardice ever feared—if devoted to the court, sacrificing every principle to “the divine right,” or retiring to his paternal estates in disgust, to dream of better days. But with better days we shall hardly dis-

cover the revival of a better spirit. We see the nobleman of the golden days of Queen Anne duly performing the grand tour—duly exhibiting a new court-suit on each court-day—and duly (I might almost say) intriguing with Bolingbroke, or enacting the patriot with Walpole, as chance or family connexions may decide ; or, in the reigns of the first three Georges, keeping a debtor and creditor account with the Pelhams and Worths of the day—of votes given and pensions received—sneering at his neighbours behind their backs with Horace Walpole, and eulogizing them to their faces with Chesterfield—fox-hunting with their tenantry, making marvellous speeches to snug corporations, giving *fêtes champêtres* to whaleboned shepherdesses and powdered swains ; and, finally, to rest beneath two tons of white marble, while a Latin epitaph, rich in superlatives, “shows forth their praise.” But enough of this burrowing among the dust and rubbish of antiquity.

The South Carolina aristocracy of the present day is not exactly what it was fifty years ago : the living generation is indolent, and but little given to intellectual, or even plausible pursuits. They may, with great propriety, be called the unproductive classes ; unless, indeed, the rice grown on their plantation, where they vegetate for a considerable portion of the year, may be taken as an equivalent for their want of personal industry. They generally flock into Charleston about this period, and may be distinguished from all the rest of mankind by their flowing locks, well oiled, brushed, and curled—fantastic, goatish beards, with whiskers and mustaches to match ; all which forms their principal stock in trade. If the avocations of these “capillary Peripatetics” be not of a very ennobling kind, it must be confessed that they *dress* with unexceptionable taste, and are quite on a par with the

most refined English gentlemen in external polish and address. Their propensity for aping European Continental manners renders them extremely obnoxious to the more sedate and sensible portion of the community; and as they lounge along the streets by fours and sixes, with that peculiar swagger which renders it impossible to conceive that the town is not their own, they are constantly calling forth remarks from their fellow-townsmen which are anything but flattering to their manhood. Still they are gentlemen of fashion—with high notions of all that is honourable and exalted in character. And being gentlemen of fashion, Mr. Abbott employed every means in his power to conciliate their good-will; believing, no doubt, that his fortune would be made if he could only secure their patronage and support. No sooner had this glorious idea taken possession of that part of the worthy manager's head where the brain is supposed to be, than he sought, by every species of flattery, to gain so desirable an end. He seemed to think it pollution to his managerial lips to pronounce any name but that of some individual claiming membership with this favoured class: his very best jokes and rarest conundrums were all safely bottled up, until they could be let off to enliven the table graced by their presence. At the theatre, every species of *extra*-civility was lavished upon them, and the comfort of everybody else was forgotten in the soul-engrossing desire to please and accommodate them. At their entrance the door-keeper smiled—the box-keeper smiled—everybody smiled. They had the run of all the private boxes, without a cent of additional charge—a favour to which a respectable tradesman and his family might have aspired in vain. Mr. Abbott was in high glee, and extremely facetious. But the treasury began to show symptoms of vacuity, and all of a sudden the house fell

off fifty per cent. The manager put up his name for a complimentary benefit, and was greeted with about forty dollars for his pains. He then began to open his eyes, as a matter of course, and found, to his unspeakable mortification, that his absurd conduct had given mortal offence to the most intelligent and influential portion of the community—the mercantile classes—while he only made himself the laughing-stock of the very persons who had engrossed his attention and monopolized all his civility. These are the true causes of Mr. Abbott's failures in Charleston. I have stated the facts without malice or ill-nature, and merely to serve as a warning to future managers.

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## CHAPTER XXII.

**A Stroll about Town.—Attractions of Charleston.—Population.—Free Negroes.—Character of the Ethiopian.—Parallel between the Blacks of the free States and the Blacks of the Southern States.—System of Police in Charleston.—Fire Companies.—Reminiscences of the Past.—Churchyard Reveries.—Fashionable Lounge.—The true Talent of Charleston, and where it is to be found.—Passion for Reading.—Popular Works.—Bulwer's Night and Morning, and the fashionable School of Literature.—Thoughts on Byron.—Mr. Combe's Travels in the United States.—Character of Mr. Combe's Writings.—The Phrenological Mania.—Gall and Spurzheim.—Antipathy to Physical Sciences.—Wordsworth's Description.—Narrow Escape from the Consequences of Metaphysical Studies.—Modern Philosophers.—Corruption of the Term Philosophy.—A Dissertation on ancient Philosophy and modern Philosophers.**

MR. ABBOTT having taken his company to Savannah, whither I promised soon to follow, I employed the few leisure days I had on hand in perambulating the thoroughfares and fashionable resorts in and about the place. Charleston is quite a bandbox city



—so neat, spruce, and new-looking, one might suppose it just taken, ready-cut, out of the quarry. A great many of the private houses are whitewashed, which gives them an air of particular tidiness ; and though, according to the Italian proverb, “ a white wall is the paper of fools,” your eye is offended by none of those obscenities so glaring in other cities. Charleston, in fact, may be considered quite a gay lady among her sisters of the South. It abounds in beautiful walks and pleasant places, remarkable for cleanliness and for purity of air. There is a species of battery, in imitation, I presume, of the famous Battery of New-York, which commands a superb view of the bay, and on a spring evening, when the sky is clear, and nothing but balmy breezes are abroad, it is impossible to conceive any spot more suited to meditative recreation than this. The air is usually laden with a thousand pleasant odours, wafted from the opposite shore, which, mingling with the fragrance of the seaweed, steal pleasantly upon the senses, causing the heart to swell and expand as if all the prisoners shut up within the pestiferous dungeon of the flesh were struggling for a general deliverance.

The population of Charleston has been computed at nearly thirty thousand, about half white and half coloured, a very large portion of the latter being free. These free blacks are generally very well off, many of them owning property to a large amount, and enjoying all the benefits of civilized society, with the exception only of political privileges : but as these constitute, after all, a rather equivocal sort of blessing, the deprivation cannot be very severely felt. The mere fact of so many slaves annually being able to purchase their emancipation, and frequently starting in the race of life with means supplied to them by their former masters, is a striking comment on the treatment receiv-

ed by them during their term of easy bondage, from their kind and indulgent owners. It is also worthy of remark, that, in all the slave-holding states I have visited, I never saw a single coloured mendicant, nor any of that nastiness in rags and appalling degradation so common and so disgusting in the cities of the free states. There is nothing which so much favours the inculcation of religious truth and sound moral principles among menials as good treatment. When a servant finds his master or his mistress scrupulously adhering to the practice of those precepts which he is taught by them to observe and respect, he is naturally made by it duly attentive to religious instruction, and to acquire all those aspirations which elevate the mind and purify the heart. Ill treatment, on the contrary, serves only to excite in the menial distrust, and to make him doubt the validity and the efficacy of that faith upon which the great doctrines of humility and benevolence are founded. Unless the sanctities of the law are held inviolate by its preachers, and the observance of moral obligations is enforced by salutary example, the disciple will be apt to jump at the conclusion that

"There are some that use  
Humility to serve their pride, and seem  
Humble upon their way, to be the prouder  
At their wish'd journey's end."

The blacks are universal imitators: they are as susceptible, therefore, of debasing influences as of humanizing impressions, and can be allured by the charms of virtue as easily as they can be fascinated by the blandishments of vice. The mind of the black seems to have few innate resources of its own, either for good or for evil: it can only reflect back what has been forced upon it by observation; and in its mimicry of human actions, it adopts what is morally bad and revolting as readily as what is intrinsically

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good and commendable. Hence the vast difference in the moral habits and condition of these people residing in free states, and those brought up under the fostering care of Southern masters. The former (taking the coloured population of New-York and Philadelphia for a criterion), living in the most loathsome quarters of the city—rocked in the cradle of depravity, and nursed in the very lap of crime—are exposed to all the brutalizing influences of the most heinous vices, and often arrive at the age of puberty without having heard even the whisper of a moral precept, and with no other guide save that of a savage instinct. The latter, with scarcely an exception worth naming, are carefully instructed from their infancy to distinguish between right and wrong, and properly to appreciate the value of those rewards which the Supreme Ruler of all things has affixed to integrity of conduct. The mind of the black, as I have before observed, is insensibly imbued with the feelings and principles of those whose example is rendered the more impressive by authority, and it will adopt them as the true standards of right and wrong, and judge all actions by them. When, therefore, the coloured man of the Southern States arrives at the age of discretion, we generally find him intelligent and well-disposed, true to God and faithful to his master ; and, whether free or slave, comporting himself with that decency of demeanour which characterizes man in a sound and healthy moral state. One of the most pleasing traits which I noticed in the South Carolinian slave, is the happy faculty he possesses of identifying himself with his master's interests, and the pride he takes in whatever contributes to the exaltation of his master's character. In conversing with them, I have often been amused at the enthusiasm they would manifest while relating an anecdote or an adventure which reflected credit on

their masters: it seems, indeed, as though there were a tacit covenant between master and slave in this state, of which mutual affection and good-will are the most striking features.

Charleston possesses one of the best organized systems of police that ever was devised. The coloured people are permitted to be abroad till ten o'clock in the evening, but no later; and, as soon as the clock strikes that hour, the city suddenly assumes the appearance of a great military garrison, and all the principal streets become forthwith alive with patrolling parties of twenties and thirties, headed by fife and drum, conveying the idea of a general siege. It is only within the last few years that this rigorous system of night-watch has been adopted; and it was deemed an indispensable precaution against any danger arising from the new ideas attempted to be propagated among the slaves.

Charleston also excels every other city in the United States in the organization of its fire department. I was, on one occasion, present at a general review of the fire companies, and in the excellence of their appointments and the regularity of their movements they appeared to me to be perfect. These companies are very numerous, being divided into two distinct sections, whites and blacks; the latter, besides their Ethiopian physiognomies, being distinguished by the less imposing appearance of their engines and more homely accoutrements. The passion for joining fire-companies in Charleston appears to have grown quite into a mania. Troops of children may frequently be seen in the streets, neatly dressed in appropriate and elegant costumes, and provided with all the implements of a regular engine company epitomized. Everything, in short, indicates an increasing partiality for this kind of excitement. A country where so many estimable citizens are willing to risk their lives for the safety

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and welfare of the community, never need stand in fear of invasion by a foreign foe.

What I said of the spruceness and Sunday-like-looking tidiness of the buildings in Charleston, was by no means intended as a slur on the antiquity of the city ; for no town in the Union, perhaps, presents to the admiring eye of a stranger so many objects associated with the history of the past as Charleston. To an Englishman, for instance, nothing could be more interesting than a visit to the principal churchyards. I once passed several hours in the Episcopalian Cemetery, accompanied by a Mr. Liefe, formerly connected with the New-York "Spirit of the Times," and one of the most agreeable companions and intelligent men I ever met with ; and it was with great difficulty that we could tear ourselves away from the place. The tombstones, with their armorial bearings and other heraldic devices, spoke of a former race of governors, and a state of things now passed away : I felt oppressed with reverential awe, and mournful thoughts crowded upon my soul. How many a brave officer lies mouldering here, who had perished by the yellow scourge, away from home and kindred—deprived of all the ties of blood and claims of friendship that sweeten social life—of all companionship with those who would fondly throw a veil over his errors, and affectionately strive to render less severe the gloomy passage to the tomb ! How many a mother's hope lies sleeping here, like a flower nipped in its bud by an untimely frost ! Our common mother earth, like a kind parent that knows no partiality in her maternal fondness, folds them again in her bosom, and spreads around their slumbers such solemn stillness, that bursting worlds could not disturb the deep repose. Here a sculptured figure is seen weeping, in graceful attitude of studied grief, as it bends over the ashes of the sleeper below ; and

there a massive pyramidal monument, that seems to defy the wasting hand of time.

What dost thou here, imperious pride?  
Must, then, the virtues of the dead be told  
In this abode (where worms reside  
And reign supreme), in letters writ with gold?  
No pious rites thy labours crave  
To gild the borders of the grave.

Death mocks thy care and scorns thy rage:  
He clips Ambition's wing, and lays him low;  
Gathers the spoils of age to age,  
Heaps up confused the wreck of friend and foe,  
And from amid the ruins high,  
He throws his dart, and nations die.

I was particularly struck, during my rambles about town, with the appearance of the ladies, as they are to be seen in their carriages. They generally drive out without any covering on their heads, dressed in the simplest manner, and almost invariably with an amusing book of fiction in their hands. The most fashionable lounging-place where the ladies of Charleston are accustomed to assemble, is Hart's Circulating Library in King-street. The proprietors of this establishment are remarkable for their politeness and obliging manners, and have one of the best collections, both of old and modern books, English and foreign, to be found in America. By frequent visits to this favourite place of resort, I learned far more of the tastes and pursuits of the better classes of Charleston than at dinner-parties and evening soirées, although at the former I frequently met with some of the choicest spirits and best-informed men in South Carolina. Men of superior minds and highly-cultivated intellects are to be met with in great abundance in the City of Charleston; but these make no pretensions to exclusiveness. Looking upon the realm of letters as a republic, they mingle freely with every class of society, and differ as widely from the mushroom literati mentioned in the preceding chapter, as Halley's comet dif-

fers from the smallest star that twinkles in the firmament. Reading constitutes, in fact, the principal recreation with all classes in Charleston. Novels, memoirs, books of travels, scientific tracts of all sorts and sizes, and historical compositions, are seized upon with the greatest avidity as soon as they are issued from the press, and still the public appetite, never satisfied, is constantly craving for more. The works most read at this particular period were Bulwer's "Night and Morning" and Combe's Travels. The former is excessively popular in Charleston; and those who, but a few years ago, knelt at the shrine of Scott, and looked upon every dabbler in fiction as a mere interloper compared with the exclusive object of their idolatry, are now to be found among the wildest admirers of the author of "Pelham." How is this? Must we forever be changing the fashion of our literature as we are that of our coats? But so it is: in all matters of enjoyment there are two kinds of beauty—the eternal, which is inseparable from our nature, and the transient, which belongs to fashion. Some writers, indeed, go so far as to say that all beauty depends on caprice: in this, however, I think they are wrong.

Dress has three objects—the decency of covering, the comfort of warmth, and the grace of ornament. The first two are presently settled—the third alone fluctuates; but on what principle it fluctuates no mortal knows. It is needless to ask, for no one can tell, why a dress that was very becoming in 1830, should be very unbecoming in 1840. But so it is; and the same may be said of literature. Take up any one of the English magazines, that were in no small abundance during the latter half of the last century, and, passing over those papers which are confessedly of a temporary nature, attempt to read some of those which delin-

erate human character, or discuss topics of perpetual and universal interest, and if you are yourself an occasional contributor to existing magazines, you will turn up your eyes with wonder, and forthwith congratulate yourself on the vast improvement that has taken place in literary taste and literary composition. A great change has taken place, certainly ; but whether, after all, it is for the better, is perhaps questionable. The writers and readers of those days were, no doubt, as well pleased with themselves and with one another, as are the writers and readers of the present day ; but their fashions are gone by, and ours are going. It will hardly do to say that the standard of literary excellence was lower then than it is now ; for Fielding, Smollett, Goldsmith, Johnson, and many others, perhaps, of equal reputation, lived in the period alluded to ; and can it be pretended that the *living* giants of literature are superior to them ? Or are the mass of writers of the present day more nearly on a level with the greatest, than they were in the last century ? I think not. The currency of living authors depends much upon fashion, but the permanency of those of a preceding age on intrinsic and sterling merit. An incident occurs to me at this moment illustrative of what I have written. Some years ago, I was in a library with a gentleman of some talent and literary taste, but more of a reader than a writer. He was amusing himself with turning over some old magazines, and I observed that, for a while, he seemed to be deeply interested ; at length, starting up, and placing the book in my hands, he said, " Here is a paper in this magazine far superior to the periodical essays of that day." I looked at the paper, and thought that I had read it before ; and I soon satisfied myself that I had, for it was from Johnson's " Idler." Probably those who read the magazine containing this paper at the



time it was first published, thought more highly of it than of any other in the number ; still to them, the difference would appear far less than to us, who live in another age and under a different fashion. Thus, as fashion changes, mere gilding will wear off, but solid gold remains the same. Lord Byron's personal history gave a great impulse to his popularity, and made him to be loudly talked about ; but posterity will not care a rush for his domestic broils or his undomestic eccentricities ; and they will not heed a straw the curl of his lip, or the chariness with which he nursed his own lordliness, or the contempt he cast upon royalty. Lord Byron, while living, was in a passion with the world : fits of amiableness, however, frequently came over him, even as, in the midst of their intensest agonies, martyrs have been known to laugh, and jest, and make sport. He was not full of contradictions, but he abounded in antagonisms, which the world calls contradictions. None so gloomy as he in Childe Harold, none so gracefully light as he in Don Juan—none so desirous of the world's praise, none so heedless of its censure—none so unkind, and yet none so kind : he was all passion, and only to be comprehended by one all philosophy. Socrates should have been his Boswell, and then the " Life of Dr. Johnson" would have been only a second-rate book ; indeed, I know of no finer subject for the investigation of a *philosophical* critic than the essence and the accidents of Lord Byron's genius.

Mr. Combe's Travels in the United States were also, at this time, creating no small sensation. The principal interest of the work, however, consists, as in his other productions, in phrenological speculations, to which he makes everything he handles subservient. I have known Mr. Combe for several years ; and although I could never bring myself to receive his favourite theories for infallible truths,

yet I have always looked upon him as one of the most powerful thinkers of the age. He has no veneration for kings, or princes, or persons of gentle lineage: he acknowledges no virtues of race. He seems to be of the opinion that Nature has dealt out her measure of good and evil in much the same proportion to all, and that the germes of heroism and virtue, as well as the seeds of passion and vice, are to be found in a cottager's hovel no less than in a palace. Man in the abstract is his study, and his characters embrace the whole human family. He exposes, with wonderful power, the influences acting on the human heart, whether they arise from rank, wealth, and honours, or from wretchedness, ignorance, and example: in a word, he gives the result of circumstances and casualties in every sphere of man's existence. The gravity, however, with which he assumes the doctrines of Phrenology as proved, makes me sometimes doubt whether the man is mad, or making verses.

When Mr. Combe first began to lecture on Phrenology in Edinburgh, the subject attracted a good deal of attention, and was sufficiently discussed. His doctrines were eagerly embraced by many persons who had never seen a brain, and he began talking with complacency of his numerous converts among the fair sex. How far an amiable desire to be acquainted with the good qualities of their neighbours—a desire very improperly termed curiosity—may have predisposed them towards embracing a system that promised so safe and easy a key, I shall not stop to inquire; certain it is, however, that he had, for a time, unbounded success. *Gravity* would have fallen to the ground had it been intrusted to the care of a jury of matrons; the *circulation* would have come to a full stop if it had been left to a drawing-room coterie; and as for *innate ideas*, they were universally voted a bore from the time that a

certain Dr. Wilson gave the *coup de grace* to an elderly *bas bleu*, who had tortured him through a whole *conversazione* for a definition of the word, by assuring her "that *ide-a* was neither more nor less than the *feminine of idi-ot*."

I have always been disposed to give Mr. Combe credit for believing what he taught, and following on, with a sort of mill-horse sagacity, the path that had been tracked out for him; but, as far as there is any merit in the science of Phrenology, it is all due to Gall. It was he who conceived the general idea—or more properly, I should say, revived it; for many rude attempts at mapping out the brain had been made before his time. It was he who undertook its extension and confirmation, by means of the most unwearied investigations in prisons, schools, hospitals, madhouses—in short, in every place where character was likely to be known or developed. It was he who gave the first lectures on the subject—lectures of which Spurzheim was an auditor, and from which he derived the greater part of his knowledge. Finally, it was he who first published those observations to the world in a connected form; for though the "*Anatomie et Physiologie du Système Nerveux*" bears both names on the title-page, yet it is well known that every line of the four volumes was written by Gall himself.

We are all, to a certain extent, cranioscopists and physiognomists. We almost intuitively observe, "What an intellectual forehead!" or, "What a bad expression of countenance!" and though experience constantly demonstrates the fallacy of such observations, we still find ourselves recurring to them, and adopting from them our first impressions of character. The idea that such observations might, by care and study, be reduced to the certainty of science, seems, at first view, sufficiently probable; and men with more imagination than

judgment, caught by this possibility of philosophy in sport being made science in earnest, joined in the pursuit, and cheered one another on as they cast their nets, or threw their caps to catch the butterfly knowledge, which kept fluttering a little, and still a little beyond their grasp. The only proper corrective for this "summer-day folly" is experience; and its effects are becoming sufficiently evident. Physiognomists and craniologists have found that, after all their pains, they are no wiser than their neighbours: they have discovered, as Momus did, that Jupiter omitted to place a glass through which we might inspect each other's breasts; and they have been contented to return almost to the old manner of gazing on faces and heads without looking for "the bump that would make a man a Howard," or "the nose that is worth a kingdom."

Spurzheim's true merit, and that by which he will be known to posterity, depends on his accurate and faithful dissections of the brain. As an anatomist, he might have shone: he had the plodding, untiring disposition which, with a little mechanical dexterity, is the best qualification for such operations. He would scratch a little with his scalpel—look a little with his microscope—push a little with his thumbs—and then look again, until he had made out the minutest fibre, and unrolled the most intricate convolution. But your pure anatomist is not a reasoning animal; he provides for others the materials of thought; for himself, it is sufficient that he has looked them out laboriously, and delineated them accurately. I well remember that a student of anatomy at the London College, who was looked upon as the best dissector of the class—the man who could most readily display the origin and insertion of every muscle, the course and distribution of every vessel, or trace out the minutest filament of a nerve, when questioned as to the *use* of the

brain, could assign to it no nobler office than that of filling the skull, "which," as he sagely remarked, "would otherwise be left empty." But the anatomical discoveries of Dr. Spurzheim have no manner of connexion with his craniological opinions. As long as men conceive the thinking power to be something distinct from organization, so long will they fail to admit any *vis consequentiæ* in metaphysical reasoning said to be founded on peculiarities of structure.

For my own part, I am disposed to shun the physical sciences as I would a pestilence; for it is one of my most fixed and cherished opinions, that, as respects a man's self, the most unfortunate mental propensity that can be indulged in is that of prying and investigating too closely into the physical causes of the natural phenomena which surround us—a disposition which forms that character described with such deep and eloquent contempt by Wordsworth, as one who is

"All eyes;  
Philosopher—a fingering slave—  
One that would peep and botanize  
Upon his mother's grave."

Several years ago, while residing in Edinburgh, I had a most glorious escape from this perilous course of study. The wonders of oxygen and hydrogen had become the great theme of conversation and subject of experiment throughout Europe; and I, too, like the rest, must know something about them: so I began to attend lectures, and study elementary books relating to them; and never shall I forget the effect they at first produced on me. I devoured their contents with a more eager appetite—a more intense interest, than had ever before been excited in me by the most high-wrought romance. I plunged into the stream, and absolutely abandoned myself to its current, sporting in its waves as in a new

element; breathing the new atmosphere, and gazing on the flowers around me, and the sky above me, with a rapture I had never felt before; for the new world in which I found myself had all these peculiar to itself. What I felt was a sort of intoxication, such as I could fancy to result from breathing the nitrous oxide about which so much was then said. Suddenly, however, I found that the stream to which I had trusted myself was bearing me onward to a precipice; and I had but just strength and resolution to escape before arriving at the edge of it. I soon learned, too, that I had only escaped just in time; for when I got back to my own world again, I found that I was looking at it through a medium which changed and distorted all its accustomed features. A film seemed to have grown over my mental sight, and I could scarcely recognise those objects which before had been my glory and delight—the contemplation of which had been the food of my moral existence; or perhaps it would be more *philosophical* to say that a film had been *removed* from my eyes: but the effects were the same. While I was gazing upon the splendid pageantry of clouds attendant on a setting sun, and watching the perpetual changes in their ineffable beauties, I found I could not at first prevent from intruding into my thoughts a strange and desperate jargon about refracted and reflected light—its effects on the vapours which are supported by the atmosphere that surrounds the earth, &c., &c. It was the same thing with all the other appearances of external nature. I could not hear a clap of thunder, or watch the moonlight playing on a stream of water, without being annoyed with an obtrusive and restless desire to inquire into their causes. But what were their causes to me? Their effects were all that I had any real concern with, and were quite enough to satisfy any reasonable desire. In short,

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all that before had contributed to lift me *above* the earth, now only excited in me the insane wish to dig downward towards its centre. I have never ceased to rejoice that I only momentarily yielded to the temptation to engage in such *dirty* work ; for, certes, before I had reached the depth of a common grave, the ground would have caved in upon me, and buried me alive.

The most amusing thing is, that those wiseacres, of whatever name, that are engaged in the study of the physical sciences, should call themselves philosophers ; as though this nether sphere of ours had suddenly been converted into a great beehive of sapient gentlemen. But philosophy in the year eighteen hundred and forty-two is something very different from what it used to be when Newton worshipped at her shrine with all the meekness of one who felt his nothingness in the sight of Infinity. Words, by long use, have become strangely perverted, and put out of all proper shape by careless or unskilful handling ; so that philosophy, nowadays, is made to mean the possession instead of the *mere love* of wisdom. Ancient philosophers *courted* wisdom—were humble suitors at her shrine ; but modern philosophers have *married* her—she has become bone of their bone and flesh of their flesh ; and philosophy now signifies wisdom *gained*, not wisdom *sought*. To receive the name of philosopher from others is an honour—to assume it one's self is sheer arrogance. Philosophy, however, such as it is, is now so exceedingly common, that the odium of such arrogance is mightily diminished, and any one that but thinks that he is thinking, may set himself up, *nemine contradicente*, for a philosopher, as he has all the world to keep him in countenance. There is scarcely a town in the Union in which any fidgety little prig, who has nothing better to do, may not get up a philosophical society. If you

have but a telescope, an almanac, and a pair of globes, and look at the moon with your nightcap on, you may conclude yourself a philosopher ; if you are in the possession of an electrical machine, and occasionally administer to your friends an electric shock, you are a philosopher ; should you be the fortunate owner of a barometer, thermometer, hygrometer, or hydrometer, chronicle the clouds, and tell the world once a week which way the wind blows, then, too, you are a philosopher ; if your mantelpiece is ornamented with brickbats, and you have a bureau filled with cockchafers and black beetles, you are a philosopher ; if you roam about the fields and explore the ditches with a tin box in your hand, picking up chickweed, groundsel, and buttercups, you are a philosopher ; if you try mortal experiments on cats, and kill mice with an air-pump, you are a philosopher ; if you risk the blowing up of your house with hydrogen gas or other explosive substance, you are a philosopher ; if you hunt for a soul with a dissecting-knife, and, because you cannot find one, pronounce that there is no such thing, you are a philosopher ; if you read German metaphysics and talk moonshine, you are a philosopher ; if you disbelieve what everybody else believes, and believe what everybody else disbelieves, you are a philosopher ; if you are indifferent who is hanged or who is drowned, or whose cat last kittened, you are a Stoic philosopher ; if you snarl at everybody and everything, and can turn milk to bonnyclapper by looking at it, you are a Cynic philosopher ; if you have a fancy for fish, flesh, and fowl, and like roast beef better than boiled squash and Graham bread, you are an Epicurean philosopher : in short, I verily believe that the difficulty now is to avoid being a philosopher ; the whole nation, from the President to the lamplighter, is philosophized ; we cannot open our ears but



wisdom must come in—we cannot open our mouths, but wisdom must go out. Everything is constructed, too, on philosophic principles—wigs, whiskers, boots, smallclothes, and bedposts; so that we are fairly forced to be philosophers, whether we will or no.

But the worst of the matter is, that as what is everybody's business is nobody's business, so what is everybody's distinction is nobody's distinction. In days of old, when reading and writing were clerkly attainments, there was some merit and desirableness in being able to read and write; but, as soon as these accomplishments became general, there was merely disgrace in being without them. This seems now to be pretty nearly the case with philosophy; and as, when people quarrel, one generally says to the other, "Sir, you are no gentleman," it will presently be the mode to say, "Sir, you are no philosopher." It is, indeed, an unpardonable sin for any one in these days to be unphilosophical. Philosophy is now made easy to the meanest capacities, and, perhaps, the meaner the capacity, the easier are philosophical attainments; for one of the chief hindrances to philosophy anciently was, that there was too high an intellectual aspiring—a compass of mind that embraced inquiries far beyond its power to answer. But, happily, there is at the present period no difficulty of this kind: we have found out short cuts to knowledge, and the feeblest of our modern minds has an answer for everything. Either the common level of mind must have been wonderfully elevated, or nature has condescendingly circumscribed her operations and simplified her principles. But should it so happen that a man cannot now carry all sorts of knowledge in his head, he can at least carry it in his pocket; and what difference does it make?—in the eye of philosophy, very little. A Penny Cyclopædia is a kind of promissory note, which says,

"For value received, I promise to pay, at ten minutes' sight, to John Smith or reader, a pennyworth of wisdom." The art of printing has doubtless greatly contributed to the diffusion of knowledge of all kinds, useful and useless, entertaining and soporific, religious and irreligious, politic and impolitic. But formerly knowledge was in the head—treasured up in the understanding; whereas now it scorns such narrow limits—it is spread on sheets of paper, fills the alcoves of libraries, adorns the lady's centre-table, stands in goodly rows on booksellers' shelves—is seen, in short, everywhere, and may be had dog cheap.

Gentle reader, be not scandalized at these remarks, nor suppose that I would withhold knowledge from the many; you would greatly mistake me did you think me capable of any such narrow views. On the contrary, my only wish is, that the shadow may not be mistaken for the substance—the flatulence of vain conceit for the solid fulness of intellectual acquirement. *Knowledge* I would have as free as air; but care must be taken lest its diffusion should prove only its dispersion—a mere scattering of it to the four winds of heaven. Even with much information there may be very little wisdom. Solomon was doubtless among the wisest of men, and is, therefore, good authority in such matters. He expressly recommends us to "Get knowledge," and therefore must have been friendly to its diffusion; but it is evident that he considered knowledge and wisdom as by no means the same thing; for to the foregoing recommendation he adds, "With all thy getting, get understanding."

The effect of knowledge is, or should be, to make men modest; and in former times it really had this effect; at least, much more so than at present. "My knowledge," said one of the ancients, "only teaches me how ignorant I am:" one might reverse this, as

applicable to too many of our modern *savans*, and say, "My ignorance only teaches me how knowing I am." I have heard the opinion advanced, and somewhat plausibly argued, that our present pantological fever is not unlikely to terminate in intellectual darkness. The reasoning was something like this: Knowledge, to be turned to any good account, requires thought; the more knowledge a man has, therefore the more of thought does he need: but men do not think in proportion to their knowledge; nay, it is but too generally the case that the more they know the less they think—knowledge is substituted for thinking. Knowledge may be increased in a geometrical ratio, while understanding is increased only in an arithmetical ratio; and when a man possesses more knowledge than understanding, his intellect is in no enviable state. The passion of the day, however, is for knowledge; and as old Horace said in former days, and a certain prudent Scotch citizen after him, in counselling his son, "Get money—honestly, if you can; but, at all events, get money;" so the language of fashion now is, "Get knowledge, and understand, if you can; but, at all events, get knowledge."

## CHAPTER XXIII.

Departure for Savannah.—Sandflies and Moschetoës compared.—The Prometheus of Æschylus.—Medwin's Translation.—A Parallel between the Greek Dramatist and Shakspeare.—The Œdipus Tyrannus of Sophocles.—Character of Sophocles.—Savannah, its Location and Eccentricities of Soil.—Thoughts on Geological Studies.—Mr. Lyell and his Theory.—Climate of Savannah.—Disagreeable Walking.—The Pulaski House.—Its superior Accommodations.—A brief Dissertation on Wine.—Effect of Wine on Authors and their Style.—Colonel Harney of Florida.—My Reception at the Theatre.—Original Paintings by Leslie.—Strictures on Leslie, Wilkie, and Fuseli.—Return to Charleston.—Judge Wayne.—Debate on the Character of Lady Macbeth, Clytemnestra, and Shylock.

TOWARDS the latter end of April I started for Savannah, making the inland passage in twenty hours, through a tract of country remarkable for eccentricities of soil. In the immediate vicinity of Charleston there are some beautiful patches of woodland scenery, which will well repay the lover of Nature for remaining on deck, if he can bear the insectile persecution he is doomed to encounter. The character of the stream, too, with its graceful windings, and lingering leisurely on its course, as if loath to quit the pleasant scenes among which it is wandering, gives an impulse to the fancy that is extremely agreeable. This enjoyment, however, was, to me, of very short duration ; for, as the whole family of gnats are particularly partial to strangers, they fastened upon me in such numbers, and inserted their probosces so voraciously, that I was soon forced to retreat to save my face from a complete scarification. The moscheto of New-Orleans is a quiet and gentlemanly creature compared with the savage bloodsuckers on the Savannah. The former has all the generosity of a frank and open en-

emy, and gives you timely warning of its approach, and opportunity to put yourself on the defensive, provided you keep yourself wide awake—and if you do not, you have nobody to blame but yourself. But the latter is a complete sneak—makes his advances stealthily—fastens upon you before you know of it—assails the tenderest parts—steals into your nostrils or the portals of your ears, and you are stung into madness, and the creature has gone clean off, before you can say Jack Robinson. Unable to make head against so redoubtable a foe, I prudently retired to the cabin, where I passed the remainder of the day in company with the Prometheus Bound of Æschylus.

The Prometheus of Æschylus has no parallel in the literature of the world; it stands alone in its naked majesty, unapproached and unapproachable—a gigantic conception, filling the mind with wonder and with awe—a creation, of which all imitations must be as the brazen clashings of Salmoneus to the thunders of Jupiter. It is an exhibition of intellectual energy, so confident in its own strength as to defy even eternal torments—of a will, so determined on freedom as to rise superior to destiny—of endurance, that scorns even the vengeance of Omnipotence. I have not forgotten Milton's Satan when I say that there is no parallel to this stupendous representation. Satan and Prometheus are beings of a very different order—the character of the latter is purely intellectual, that of the former is mingled with baser qualities; nothing but what is noble meets our view in the Titan, who suffers for benefiting mankind; whereas fraud and treachery are prominent and essential qualities in the prince of evil. That Milton borrowed some traits for his description of Satan from Æschylus, cannot be doubted; but then they have been so changed by being harmonized with others of a far different nature,

that all resemblance is lost. Both may therefore be fairly considered original conceptions—alike in their melancholy grandeur, and in everything else dissimilar. The great political events witnessed by Æschylus were no doubt among the causes that predisposed his mind to those massive and gloomy conceptions which his genius found so much delight in delineating. He had seen the greatest human power united with the greatest human malignity; he had witnessed an exhibition of free energies unsubdued by misfortune, unconquered by defeat, and, in the midst of destruction, indestructible. He had beheld a nation without a country—citizens without a city—maintaining their laws, customs, and religious rites, all in full vigour, as much as though no Persian had polluted the hills of Attica, and no barbarian torch lighted up the “City of Minerva;” and when of Athens naught visible remained but her ashes, scattered by every wind of heaven, the city still existed in the hearts of the citizens, based upon a surer foundation than the rocks of the Acropolis. Such events naturally tended to direct the mighty mind of the father of tragedy to that mysterious struggle between destiny and will, which Milton declares to be inexplicable even to angelic apprehension: undaunted by “shadows, clouds, and darkness” resting on it, he rushed to the dizzy verge where human knowledge stops, and, casting no glance on things behind, gazed in ecstasy on the dark expanse before him, peopled with spectral images of his own creation, wandering in awful indistinctness through the gloom. A traditional religion, fast fading from the view of his contemporaries, tended not a little to give substantial being to these vague and mysterious notions. It was said that another celestial dynasty had ruled the universe before the throne of Jupiter was established on Olympus, and these indistinct traditions, relating

to the revolutions among the gods, at once stimulated and awed the imagination. For an account of the Titanian deities, I would refer the reader to Keightley's admirable Treatise on Mythology: a work equally remarkable for extensive research and sound philosophy, uniting great erudition with plain common sense. The more ancient deities of the Greeks appear to have been, like those of the Asiatics, in a great degree *elementary*—not actuated by human passions, and scarcely susceptible to human feelings; and their very indistinctness recommended them to the vast imagination of *Æschylus*: they possessed that attribute of the terrible which, in the book of Job, makes us creep with horror: "A spirit passed before my face: the hair of my flesh stood up: it stood still, but I could not discern the form thereof."

This drama opens with a scene which can scarcely be described. Prometheus, at once a god and a personification of human powers sublimed, appears stretched on a rock in the Scythian desert: Strength and Force—beings without compassion, blind slaves of the destiny that rules upon Olympus—are riveting the adamantine chains. Vulcan, though equally bound to obey the behests of Jupiter, cannot restrain his pity, and is taunted by Strength for yielding to the soft emotion. They strain the limbs—they twist the chains—they bind the fetters—"the iron enters into his soul;" but the Titan sustains it all in the majesty of silence; not a word, nor sigh, nor groan escapes him: it is not until his tormentors have departed that he bursts forth with his magnificent appeal to Universal Nature:

Best and divinest air! ye swift-wing'd winds!  
Ye river springs and ocean billows! ye  
That, countless in your multitudes, laugh out  
With long, loud peals—exulting to be free!  
Earth, universal mother of all life!

And thou, O sun, whose eye pierces all nature,  
You I invoke! look on me what I suffer  
From gods, a god!

His solitude is interrupted by the appearance of the compassionate ocean nymphs, the most lovely, tender, and spiritual of all poetic creations. The conversation of Prometheus with these gentle beings alternates between vivid recollections of the past and faint glimpses of the future, mingled with uncontrollable bursts of present agony: for a moment it is broken in upon by the Titan Oceanus, vainly urging submission to his fate. Oceanus withdraws, however, and the nymphs again listen to the mysterious prophecies of the suffering Titan: the choral odes in which they reply are without a parallel for force and beauty. Io, another victim of persecution, enters, and, amid all the severity of his own tortures, Prometheus is touched with sympathy for hers. The departure of Io hastens the catastrophe: Mercury appears, and threatens Prometheus with the vengeance of Jove if he does not explain the dark threats he has uttered, portending direful calamities to the god of gods. His refusal is in a tone of stern and insulting defiance:

There is no outrage,  
Torment, or artifice of Jove that can  
Alter my firm resolve: never will I  
Dispense my knowledge till he loose these chains.  
Then let him hurl his lightnings as he will,  
And shake the solid earth with all his thunders;  
Pour down a hurricane of white-wing'd snows  
To sweep resistless ruin, and confound  
And mingle all things; me he shall not move,  
Nor shake my purpose never to reveal  
By whom shall fall the tyrant.

Threats and remonstrances prove equally unavailing to change his strong resolve; but scarcely has he finished before the thunder rolls, the lightning flashes, the earth shakes, the winds rush from the four quarters of heaven, and, amid this elemental uproar, the rock, with the unconquered and uncon-



querable Titan, sinks into the depths of the dark regions below.

I remember once reading an admirable paper in an English magazine, drawing a parallel between the great father of our stage and that of the Greeks. After observing that it is hardly fair to institute a comparison between the imperfect remains of the great Grecian poet and the complete works of the English bard, the writer admits that "the versification of the former, with the intermixture of lyrical composition, is more various than that of Shakspeare." This is critically true: both are lofty and sublime in the extreme, and abundantly metaphorical, sometimes even to extravagance. Both are subject to be hurried away by uncontrollable impulse; nor could Nature alone suffice for either. Æschylus had a world of imaginary beings already created for him; he could call his spirits from the vasty deep, and they were sure to come. But Shakspeare had no such creation at command, and boldly made one of his own. If Æschylus, therefore, was invincible, he owed it to his borrowed armour, and that, like the armour of Æneas, was the work of the gods; but the *unaided* invention of Shakspeare extended to all, and supplied him with far more than superstition did to Æschylus.

It is only of late years that the world has been inclined to do justice to Æschylus. Whether owing to the peculiarity and difficulty of his style, or the faultiness of the text, certain it is that it has been the fashion to decry this great author. The French critics (who found echoes in Dryden and Pope) have one and all placed him on the shelf, and given the palm to Euripides, who is to Æschylus what Beaumont and Fletcher are to Shakspeare. Rapin charges upon Æschylus confusion in his metaphors, and the substitution of pompous words for ideas. Salmasius calls the Agamemnon more ob-

scure than the Hebrew writings. Dr. Johnson, in all his critical works, scarcely makes a single allusion to *Æschylus*; nor does he enumerate his plays among the classical works read to Milton, nor seem to be at all aware how much our immortal bard was indebted to them. Thus, even in England, the *Prometheus* was the only play that, up to a recent period, exercised the ingenuity of commentators and editors. Medwin's translation is decidedly the best version in our language, and will give the mere English reader a correct, though but a faint, notion of the sublime original—the vitality, the soul-stirring energy, the superhuman vigour of the Greek is wanting: still it is marked by accurate knowledge, love of the great author, rigid fidelity, and no small share of poetic power. We might accord to this translation the praise conceded to *Phaeton*—

“*Magnis excidit ausis.*”

The only Greek drama which can at all compare with the *Prometheus* of *Æschylus* is the *Œdipus Tyrannus* of *Sophocles*; and this last is the only tragedy of ancient or modern times which unfolds the catastrophe at the very opening of the play; still, the interest is not only kept up, but increases in intensity to the very end. This effect is produced by the slow but sure gradations by which *Œdipus* is made sensible of his involuntary crime: the sufferings of the Thebans by plague, pestilence, and famine, excite in his mind a suspicion of great and unexpiated guilt; the response of the oracle announces that Divine vengeance demands atonement for the murder of *Laius*: *Œdipus* pours imprecations on the head of the homicide; when he learns from *Tiresias* that he has been invoking curses on himself. The honest indignation of *Œdipus*—his suspicion that *Creon* has suborned the prophet—the fearful denunciations of *Tiresias*—all rivet our atten-

tion to this first stage of the awful revelation, while, at the same time, we gain a distant view of the dire consummation. The anger of Œdipus leads to the interference of Jocasta, anxious to shield her brother from her husband's wrath: incidentally she states a circumstance that leads Œdipus to fear that he had murdered his predecessor, and inquiry confirms it. The arrival of a shepherd from Corinth awakens a hope that the still greater guilt of parricide had not been incurred: but while he is showing that Polybus was not the father of Œdipus, his story, but too well understood, informs the queen that her son is standing before her in the person of her husband. Her entreaties that he would forbear inquiry only stimulate him to fresh investigations—the horrid secret gradually unfolds itself—he drinks the cup of overwhelming misery drop by drop:

And the spell now works around him,  
And the clankless chains have bound him;  
O'er his heart and brain together  
Hath the word been pass'd—to wither.

The only parallel I know to this instance of an author trusting so much to his own power as to make known the catastrophe in the very outset, is Scott's "Bride of Lammermuir:" the verses of Tristrem, "When the last lord of Ravenswood to Ravenswood shall ride," &c., are as definite as the prophecy of Tiresias—every sentence points directly to their accomplishment; but, though the conclusion never disappears from view for a moment, the interest of the successive incidents never flags.

The charm of the piece, however, is Antigone—the most beautiful personification of filial and feminine affection that ever emanated from a poet's soul. Her faithful attendance on her hapless father, to alleviate whose wretchedness she has devoted the morning of her life—her affectionate pleading for her erring brother—and her anxious desire to save

Thebes from the evils threatened by fraternal war, invest her with a moral loveliness which identifies her with every feeling that is noble in our nature. When, at last, she puts at hazard her own life that the rites of sepulture may be paid to the body of the unfortunate Polynices, a strength and firmness of determination are revealed that could scarcely be expected in a creature of so much tenderness, did we not know that wounded affection will momentarily inspire an energy sufficiently great to rise above all danger and to defy all consequences: it is the manifestation of strength in weakness—of courage in timidity—of heroic daring in the very softness of effeminacy.

Sophocles has always been considered the successful rival of Æschylus: he certainly commenced his career by a decided triumph over his great master. But, although Sophocles bears the impress of the age in which he lived, it is not stamped so deeply and strongly as on Æschylus, because, in the course of a generation, the political character of Greece had assumed a milder form, and a less marked and peculiar type. The exaggerations of the Persian war—its moving millions—its slaughtered myriads—streams drank dry by thirsting armies—rivers bridged by the slain—seas gay in the morning with the sails and streamers of countless fleets, and darkened in the evening by their unsightly wrecks: these stupendous vicissitudes, that surrounded Æschylus, as it were, with an atmosphere of moral sublimity, had, in the days of Sophocles, become a mere recollection—"a tale of days gone by." Danger had given way to glory, excitement had been changed for tranquillity, and deliberations in the public assemblies absorbed the interest lately accorded to struggles in the field. At such a period, the majesty of repose, which peculiarly distinguishes the genius of Sophocles, had more attrac-

tions, even for the excitable population of Athens, than that terrific grandeur which can scarcely be contemplated without pain. There are moods of mind, in nations as well as individuals, when the tranquil rivulet is more pleasing than the foaming cataract, and the serene landscape than the sublimity of the storm. To this change in the national temperament, and not to his innate superiority, must be ascribed the victory of Sophocles over Æschylus : in power the disciple was inferior to his master, but he surpassed him in the art of pleasing, and the trial took place when pleasure was the sole object of the judges.

It is said by most critics that the highest aim of Sophocles was to excite pity, and it is certain that it is this chord in the heart which he most effectually touches ; but I doubt his ever having written a line specially with this intention. If any general design can be traced in his works, I hold it to be an anxiety to exalt human nature—to give us ennobling views of others and of ourselves—to teach us that moral loveliness dwells in every heart, though circumstances may blight its growth or wither its roots. Even Clytemnestra ceases to be the Lady Macbeth of antiquity in his hands : a mother's sorrow mingles with the joy she feels when told that her son, the sworn avenger of her guilt, has died prematurely ; a parent's tenderness softens the threats with which she replies to the stinging reproaches of Electra. The fearful tragedy that consummated the guilt and misery of the Pelopid family has been dramatized by the three illustrious Athenians. I am little disposed to attempt a comparison between them, after it has been so ably done by Schlegel ; but I recommend to those who would learn the differences of genius, to undertake an analysis for themselves—to contrast the gloomy horrors of retributive justice in Æschylus, and the de-

grading influence of vice in Euripides, with the display of the heart's best affections in Sophocles, where deepest hate springs from deepest love, and retains to the last the softening characteristics of its original.

But I must quit a theme on which I have, perhaps, already dwelt too long, and again take up the thread of my journal, for the sandy heights on which the town of Savannah stands are in full view before me. There is no part of the Southern States which presents so many inequalities of soil as this section of Georgia. Bleakness and sterility occupy almost the same spot with fertility and beauty—rugged declivities occur in the very midst of level plains—smiling landscapes and isolated tracts of romantic scenery repose on the very lap of desolation—and on the most barren and ungainly sites may be found gardens containing some of the richest and rarest plants, as well as all the luxuries of the vegetable kingdom. To the geologist the State of Georgia must present, I think, a rich field for observation; but, strange to say, Geology, although the most interesting and entertaining of all the physical sciences, has as yet never formed a very popular branch of study in America. It is to be hoped, however, that the visit to the United States of a man so eminent in this science as Mr. Lyell, may be the means of exciting a proper spirit of inquiry, and of disseminating correct views on the subject.

Every generation of man is born to stare at something, and in our day Geology appears to be the great theme of wonder. The ablest men, both in England and on the Continent of Europe, have devoted themselves with zeal to the cultivation of this science, and societies have been formed for prosecuting inquiries connected with it. Geology, taken in its widest meaning, presents a field of almost boundless ex-

tent, comprehending, in addition to the ordinary topics considered as constituting its peculiar province, the discussion of many of the most difficult and interesting questions in general physics, meteorology, botany, and comparative anatomy; and it is probably to the great variety of subjects embraced within its range that it is mainly indebted for the popularity it has acquired in other countries. There are few, in fact, at all devoted to the study of Nature, in her phenomena and laws, who may not, if they choose, contribute to the advancement of geological knowledge. Nor is this a privilege reserved only for those who are versed in the sciences. The individual who, merely from curiosity, and without any ulterior view, forms a collection of minerals, fossil shells, and plants, or other organic remains, noting the locality where each was found, though he may be to some an object of ridicule for the earnestness with which he devotes himself to apparently trifling pursuits, is a real benefactor to science; for, by thus accumulating facts, he is preparing the way for the solution of the most interesting geological questions. Possessing, therefore, this peculiarity, that it admits of being extended and improved by the co-operation of those who aim at no higher reputation than that of being patient observers and accurate recorders of phenomena, numbers have been attracted to its study, and contributed to its elucidation.

The materials, however, thus collected, have, as is often the case in the infancy of a science, not always been employed with judgment. By different individuals they have been made the bases of unsubstantial theories, and of systems not only opposed to each other, but to Nature also. This jarring of hypotheses has been, in a great measure, the result of premature attempts at generalization; but it must also, in part, be attributed to the innate dif-

faculty and complexity of the subject. Profound and extensive acquaintance with the natural sciences, patience in the investigation of facts, and sagacity in eliciting truth from a mass of conflicting statements, are qualities indispensable to any one undertaking the arduous task of reducing to order the insulated discoveries in Geology, and combining them into a system, whose parts should all harmonize with each other, and tend to the same general conclusions. No wonder that the speculations of Buffon, Burnet, and Leibnitz have fallen into oblivion, or are only referred to as monuments of perverted eloquence and genius. These illustrious writers, totally regardless of facts, proceeded to the construction of theories, which, however they may have dazzled for a time, have vanished before the progress of inductive Geology. The successors of these eminent cosmogonists were almost equally unsuccessful in the same field, though their failure arose from a different cause. Werner did not announce preconceived theories, or advance views altogether unsupported by facts; and justice requires a similar admission in reference to Hutton, his ablest and most distinguished opponent. The former, however, was more of a mineralogist than a geologist, or had, at all events, extended his geological researches little beyond the bounds of Saxony, the physical structure of which he very precipitately concluded to represent with accuracy that of the earth's crust in every other part of the world; while the latter, flushed with his success in refuting the principles of his adversary, was occasionally hurried, by the excitement of controversy, into the giving of too great an extension to his own theory, and into the maintenance of opinions as untenable as those to which he was opposed.

The most distinguished of all modern geologists is, beyond dispute, Mr. Lyell. To him, more than



to any of his contemporaries, belongs the merit of original thinking, philosophic inference, and eloquent illustration. The great position in that excellent work styled "Principles of Geology," and one which Mr. Lyell everywhere supports with uncommon ability, is, that existing causes, or such as are in actual operation, are sufficient to explain all those various appearances of the earth's surface which constitute the study of the geologist. The cataclysms of the early theorists he discards upon the double ground, that they are not only assumptions unsupported by evidence and inconsistent with the uniformity of nature, but that they are altogether unnecessary to the explication of observed phenomena. This practice of resorting to irregular and extraordinary causes for the solution of geological difficulties, he reprobates in forcible language, asserting that it is still in full force, and daily productive of consequences most injurious to the science. His arguments are supported with great ingenuity and force; and one feels astonished at the extent of knowledge which he brings to bear upon his subject, and the eloquence and dexterity with which he wields it. His work is, in short, one of the noblest depositories of facts in modern times, interwoven with highly ingenious theories and truly philosophical speculations.

It is difficult to conceive what could have led the founders of Savannah to so bad a selection of locality. On landing, you are met by a steep and rugged hill, the ascent of which is rendered doubly disagreeable by the sandy nature of the ground, obliging you to take at least one step backward for every two you take forward. The town itself is squatted in the very centre of a sand-pit, and looks for all the world like a fine-dressed lady stretched at full length in the middle of a quagmire. The streets, with very few exceptions, are without pave-

ment—a circumstance which renders all exercise on foot extremely unpleasant and fatiguing. The least fall of rain immediately floods all the crossings, frequently for several days in succession, and gives the place the appearance of a “deserted city;” for very few persons, and these only at the instigation of urgent and imperative business, are to be seen in the streets when the reign of mud succeeds to that of dust. Were it not for these disagreeable peculiarities of soil, Savannah would be a delightful place of residence, as it is decidedly the healthiest city south of the Potomac. There is a freshness about the atmosphere which is in the highest degree exhilarating; and the city is so beautifully laid out as to call forth unbounded admiration from the stranger who visits it for the first time. The most remarkable feature about Savannah is the Pulaski House, being, beyond any comparison whatever, *number one* among the very best and most genteel hotels in the United States. On reaching this abode of luxury and comfort, I was surprised at the primitive simplicity of the building; while the utter unconcernedness of the servants, and their freedom from all anxiety to lay hold of my person and luggage, caused me to open my eyes a little wider; when presently a portly-looking, middle-aged personage, bearing indisputable evidence of good feeding, and a healthy state both of body and mind, made his appearance, and, in a very calm and dignified manner, desired to know my wishes. I felt very uncomfortable: serious misgivings that I had mistaken the house, and unconsciously intruded myself on the premises of some private family, began to haunt me; and at last I began to stammer forth an apology, as a prelude to my retreat. I was soon given to understand, however, that there was no mistake in the matter, for my interrogator was no other person than that very distinguished functionary, Captain

W——, the gentlemanly proprietor of the Pulaski House. To take things easy, and fathom the character of the different individuals presenting themselves at his door, seems to be an essential part of his system, and the result is, that the Pulaski House is always overrun with company, and that of the very best and choicest kind.

If I at first experienced some surprise at the frigidity of my reception, I was not less astonished at the excellent treatment I met with when once fairly installed in my new quarters, and numbered among the inmates of the house. It is difficult to convey an idea of the sumptuousness of the table at this establishment: the variety of costly trifles that are every day displayed as a stimulus to appetite is almost incredible. I was once under the impression that a good Scotch breakfast constituted the *ne plus ultra* of epicurean enjoyment; but a breakfast at the Pulaski has fairly put all my previous notions of luxurious eating to flight. Can I ever forget those prawns?—can I ever obliterate from my remembrance those memorable fits of indigestion which these crustaceous delicacies entailed upon me?—delightful visions of departed joys! I cling to the charming recollections you conjure before me, with all the passionate attachment of one who loved you “not wisely—but too well!”

A table so richly supplied with all that could give the most admirable diversity to food, could scarcely fail of being equally characterized by the purity and excellence of its wines; and, indeed, the wines of the Pulaski House have been the theme of universal commendation even among the nicest *connoisseurs*, and those to whom the bottle is vine, vintage, and all. This is a subject, by-the-by, entitled to very grave consideration; for wine is a charming friend to man, and yet how few even of its greatest admirers seek to know anything about it beyond the

gratification it confers—about its manufacture, the varieties of the vine, its culture, the soils and exposures most congenial to it, &c.

Oh! how intellectual—how inspiring—how courageous is wine! Does it not mount at once to the head, and give shape and being to a thousand airy dreams and brilliant actions? In a literary point of view, wine, I doubt not, has more to do with the styles of authors than has hitherto been imagined. “Tell me your company,” says the proverb, “and I will tell you what *you* are.” Tell me, say I, the wine you drink, and I will tell you what manner of writing you will excel in. The poet will achieve but little upon heavy port, unless he is in for a regular epic; the historian cannot expect to be spirited over the wastes of time by the momentary spur of Champagne; the novelist, to create character and incident, must have something more stirring than the quiet influence of a Rhenish potation; and the biographer, if he would “do to the life,” must shun as he would hellebore the stupefying Cape. As the insect takes its colour from the leaf on which it feeds, so will an author’s productions their character from the wine he drinks. Thus we may always judge from the works of a writer what was his favourite wine. Cobbett, it is well known, drank port—not the curious, light, racy beverage, schooled in the wood and colleged in the bottle, but your genuine, rough, banging blackstrap. Lord Byron, as he confesses in his journal and letters, indulged in claret—*branded* claret; and hence the strength, spirit, and flavour of his writings, and the sour views he takes of men and things. Rogers drinks moderately of the sober Rhenish; and, therefore, he always writes correctly, and never loses his *memory*; and Moore loves his Champagne, whence the dazzling, sparkling brilliancy of his style. Scott drank all sorts of wines, and to glorious excess; whereas the “School for

Scandal," it is well ascertained, was written under the influence of sherry alone. I am not sufficiently acquainted with the style of living indulged by Irving, Halleck, or Willis, to attempt any comparison between it and their respective styles of writing, nor shall I pursue the inquiry, curious as it is, any farther. I have merely started the subject, and my readers may follow it, if they choose, to some more certain conclusion.

I have already intimated that the Pulaski House is particularly select as to the character of its visitors. The impression one has in sitting down at the table, is that of enjoying the hospitalities of some private family, and being surrounded by so many invited guests. Among those staying at the Pulaski at the time of my visit was the celebrated Colonel Harney, of Florida, whose summary mode of dealing with the Indians has done more towards putting an end to that calamitous war than any course of action adopted by his predecessors. From this gentleman I received much interesting information relative to the military operations in Florida, the character of the country, and the nature of the contest. I was not a little disappointed in the appearance and manners of Colonel Harney; from the different accounts I had read of his terrible *modus operandi*, I had pictured him to my imagination as a man ferocious in disposition, and of a peculiarly forbidding aspect; whereas I found him remarkably prepossessing in his appearance, mild and amiable in his manners, excessively pleasing in his conversation, and unusually polished in address.

My reception at the theatre was extremely flattering—more so, indeed, than I had experienced at any other place except Mobile. The audiences were generally respectable for numbers, orderly, and attentive; and although the engagement was not quite as lucrative as some that I had played,

yet I was convinced by the general tone of the press, which is conducted by gentlemen of talent and character, and by other indications of public feeling, that, under favourable auspices, Savannah would generously reward any actor, lecturer, or singer deserving of patronage, for his endeavours to entertain or instruct them. After a sojourn of twelve days, during which I learned just enough of the inhabitants to appreciate their moral and intellectual worth, to envy them their happy mode of living, and to regret that I could not abide longer to know more of them, I bade a reluctant adieu to this most hospitable city, and once more embarked for Charleston.

Previous to my departure I called to pay a farewell visit to a gentleman distinguished for his love and patronage of the fine arts. At his house I had the pleasure of seeing two original paintings by Leslie, which, as I was informed, had never been shown at any exhibition. In these pictures the artist had sought for his subjects in the poetry of Scotland—during his residence, no doubt, in that country. They are both characterized by that exquisite delicacy of touch and beautiful uniformity of colouring for which he was so eminently distinguished. I have often wondered, knowing, as I did, the peculiar bent of Leslie's genius and feelings, that he did not draw his inspiration more freely from the splendid minstrelsy of Scotland. The images in those lyrics are so defined and graphic—so visibly limned to the eye, that an artist would have less to do in giving shape and colour to them, than in making pictures where he had to supply from his own imagination what was required to render them beautiful.

Leslie stands high among the painters of domestic scenes, or subjects connected with life and manners. His pictures are all nature—not common, but

select ; all life—not muscular, but intellectual. He delighted in delineating the social affections—in lending lineament and hue to the graceful scenes of the fireside. No one saw with a truer eye the exact form which a subject should take ; and no one surpassed him in the rare art of inspiring it with sentiment and life. He is always easy, elegant, and impressive : he studied his pictures with great care, and, perhaps, never put his pencil to the canvass till he had painted the whole subject mentally, and could see it distinctly before him. He is full of quiet vigour ; in humour he approaches Wilkie, and Stothard in the delicacy of female loveliness, while he has a tenderness and pathos altogether his own. His action is easy—there is no straining : his men are highly intellectual, without seeming to know it, and his women have sometimes an alluring *naïveté*, with an unconscious loveliness of look, such as no other painter rivals. Roger de Coverley going to church among his parishioners, Uncle Toby looking into the dangerous eye of the pretty Widow Wadman, and sundry others, are all marked with nature and truth, and with exquisite delicacy of feeling. He touches on the most perilous topics, but always carries them out of the region of vulgarity into that of pure genius. It is in this fine sensibility that the strength of Wilkie and Leslie lies : there is the decorum of Nature in all they do ; they never pursue an idea to extravagance, nor allow the characters which they introduce to overact their parts : in this Leslie differs from Fuseli, who, with true poetic perception of art, seldom or never made a true poetic picture. Leslie goes to the proper length, and not a step farther ; but Fuseli, in his poetic race, always ran past the winning-post, and got into the regions of extravagance and absurdity. When Leslie painted Sancho Pança relating his adventures to the duchess, he exhibited the sly humour and

witty cunning of the squire in his face, and added no action; but when Fuseli painted the Wives of Windsor thrusting Falstaff into the bucking-basket, he represented Mrs. Ford and Mrs. Page as half flying: the wild energy with which they do their mischievous ministering is quite out of character with nature, with Shakspeare, and with the decorum of art.

The pictures of Leslie are so many proofs of the fancy and poetry which lie hid in ordinary things till genius finds them out. With the spirit of a Burns, he sought out subjects in scenes where ordinary men would never have thought of looking. Some of his brethren selected nothing but the most magnificent themes for their pencils, as if the object had been to show how low a flight they could take compared with the height which their subject required: but it was the more rational habit of Leslie to choose such subjects as were fit for mortal skill to delineate, and which were, at the same time, out of the common road, for the very reason that they were common; and to manage them in such a way as to surprise the most fastidious critic with unlooked-for beauties, far exceeding his expectations. His judgment was equal to his genius. His colouring is lucid and harmonious, and the character which he gives to his pieces is stronger still than his colouring. He tells his story with but few figures; there are no mobs in his compositions; he introduces nothing for the sake of effect—all seems as natural to the scene as the leaf is to the tree. His pictures from Washington Irving are admirable: "Ichabod Crane" haunts us; "Dutch Courtship" is ever present to our fancy; "Anthony Van Corlaer leaving his Mistresses for the Wars" is at once ludicrous and affecting; "The Dutch Fireside," with the negro telling a ghost story, is capital; and "Philip, the Indian Chief, deliberating," is a figure worthy of Lysippus.



On my way back to Charleston I was under no necessity of wasting my thoughts upon the desert air, for I found a most agreeable companion in the person of Judge Wayne—a gentleman possessing great depth of observation, and extensive scholastic learning, with a command of language and range of illustration which one seldom finds united in any one individual. Judge Wayne I found to be an enthusiastic admirer of Macready, whom he very justly considers as the noblest living upholder of the majestic fabric of Shakspeare's genius; or, at least, of whatever in it has been reared by Nature's hand—bearing her pure Doric form and impress. Our conversation first turned upon Lady Macbeth, whom he compared to the Clytemnestra of Æschylus, admitting, however, that the comparison was in favour of the latter; and in this I perfectly agreed with him. Clytemnestra was actuated by a sense of the bitterest wrongs. The sacrifice of the youngest, dearest of her daughters to disenchant the Thracian winds, and the presence of her rival in the person of Cassandra,

Who, in the very ship in which he sail'd,  
Press'd the same deck with Agamemnon,

were powerful stimulants to her revenge. Lady Macbeth excites in us unmingled horror. Ambition is the sole plea for her atrocities, and hers may well be termed *ανδροβουλον καρ*; the assassination of her sovereign, and that under her own roof, forming the double crime of a breach of hospitality and allegiance, would not have been tolerated on the Greek stage. She had, besides, no supernatural agency to excite her to the deed; for Macbeth's interview with the witches, though communicated to her, forms no part of her motives—she defies auguries, and places no trust

In the false phantoms of the torpid sense!

whereas Clytemnestra fully believed in the predictions of Calchas, and was made an instrument of her paramour's hereditary hate. It is remarkable that Macbeth, though he committed his crimes at the instigation of his wife, never upbraids her; and, in like manner, Clytemnestra lays no part of her guilt on Ægisthus—she takes to herself the sole responsibility.

Our next subject of discussion was Shylock, and the manner in which he is usually represented on the stage. Judge Wayne was of the opinion, that actors, for the most part, had been unjust to him—that they had made him too coarse, too servile, too vindictive, too penurious, too griping, too unjust, and so ferocious in his nature as to be without those common feelings of tenderness towards kindred which even the brute creation generally possess. Nay, that they have even denied to him the negative merit of superior cunning, by making him propose the forfeiture of a pound of Christian flesh, in a manner so pressing and impatient, as must, by its very earnestness, defeat his own object—exposing at once the malice and cruelty of his secret intentions towards Antonio.

The various feelings alluded to, as being too prominently brought forward by the personators of Shylock, are, however, to my thinking, clearly and sufficiently made out by the language he uses. With regard to Shylock's being denied the merit even of superior cunning, does any one imagine it to be credible that he could possibly have practised so much cunning as effectually to impose on Antonio and Bassanio, and conceal his real purpose from them? If such had really been the author's intention, it strikes me that he would have made Shylock put in the bond this alternative—such and such interest, or a pound of flesh—thus helping to conceal his real design, and to throw his

victim off his guard, by leaving to himself an option which Antonio could never dream he would enforce, to the prejudice of his ruling passion. Did Shakspeare mean, that, knowing Shylock's nature as they did, they should for a moment be so imposed upon? Surely not: Antonio assents to the bloody condition at once, though without reflection, it is true; and so far it might at first seem probable that he really trusted the Jew's assertion, that he proposed it "in a merry sport." The two next speeches, however, plainly prove that both he and Bassanio are fully aware of the danger, and the possibility of its being realized; though the former treats it lightly, and appears to be in no fear of it, as it was so little likely ever to become serious. It has been asserted by some that Shakspeare intended to present, in the character of Shylock, a pattern of the whole body of his countrymen, but of this there appears to be no proof; at least, there is nothing in the writings of the poet himself to give any countenance to such a supposition.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

Lecture on the Pursuits of Literature.—Misrepresentations in the New-York Papers.—Multiplicity of Amusements in Charleston.—The Charity Fair.—Remarks on Fancy Fairs in general.—Verses.—Mr. Braham's Concerts.—Remembrances of Braham.—The Messiah.—Anecdote of Braham.—Herwig the Violinist.—Party of Pleasure on Sullivan's Island.—Rev. Mr. Forrest.—Erroneous Impressions respecting Presbyterian Clergymen.—Religious Classes in Charleston.—Milman's History of Christianity.—Intelligence of the Religious Classes.—Ancient Prejudices against the Utility of Learning in Clergymen.—Credibility of Religion, and what it depends on.—Startling Hypothesis of Dr. Croly.—State of Religion in America.—Philosophy of Kant.—Conciliatory Spirit among Clergymen of different Denominations.—Bishop England.—His Popularity.—His Eloquence and Piety.—His Farewell Sermon.—Progress of Roman Catholicism.—Ancient Errors and their Origin.—Causes for the Advance of Catholicism and the Decline of Protestantism.—Reopening of the Charleston Theatre.—Failures.—The Guying System.—Fruitless Attempt to establish improper Prints in the South.—Bilious Fever.—Departure for Richmond.

IMMEDIATELY after my arrival in Charleston, I was waited upon by a committee of gentlemen, with a request that I would lecture before the Apprentices' Library Association, on some evening that might suit my convenience. I very cheerfully consented to do so, and on the evening of the second of May delivered a discourse on the *Pursuits of Literature*. The audience was highly respectable, and stated to be the largest that had ever assembled within the walls of that institution. The papers of the following day gave a very glowing description of the affair, dwelling upon the character and intelligence of the audience as the best proof of the respect in which the lecturer was held by the community. This was certainly very gratifying to my feelings, and in some measure compensated me for a severe cold that the excessive heat of the room had entailed upon me. I should not, how-

ever, have perpetrated so gross a piece of egotism as even to allude to the matter, were it not for the purpose of showing by what detestable practices and dastardly perversions of truth the press will sometimes goad a man to desert the path of rectitude, and abandon pursuits at once creditable to himself and beneficial to society. A week or ten days after this, happening to take up a New-York weekly paper of the latest date, I saw, to my amazement, a contemptible allusion to my name, in connexion with the circumstance above related—calculated to mystify the reader, and to lessen me in public estimation. This induced me to look into the back numbers of that journal, when I found that my career in the South had been remarked upon in the same spirit of bitter animosity, and that whatever had been said in my favour in the Southern prints, had either been wilfully distorted or maliciously kept out of sight. And this is the course which has been pursued towards me for the last five years, by men who seem to have sworn to persecute me to the last verge of human endurance. It is with extreme reluctance that I approach any subject connected with my personal history. Throughout this work it has been my anxious wish to diversify its pages with miscellaneous remarks on such topics as I believed would be interesting to the reader, and to touch as lightly as possible on self; but there are moments when the heart is torn by thoughts which crowd upon it—when the mind staggers under a sense of wrongs, and must give them utterance.

There was no dearth of amusements in Charleston at this period; for, although the theatre was closed, a charity fair had been got up, which drew the fashionable world to it in crowds, and there were concerts in great abundance. In regard to these fancy fairs, I never could approve of them.

There is, no doubt, a great deal of excellent charitable feeling engaged in getting them up, but the principle appears to me decidedly bad: they take the bread from the mouths of the industrious classes by the sale of articles that have given them no employment. Every article purchased at one of these fairs is, to the extent of the sum paid for it, so much taken from the pockets of the poor; or, what amounts to the same thing, from the demand for their labour. Neither do I much admire the parading of so many young ladies—*modest* young ladies—in the assumed character of shopwomen, huckstering with gentlemen, or no gentlemen, as the case may be, about the articles they have to dispose of. Youth and beauty are specially sought for, and considered important qualifications for the office of seller; and thus some pretty youngling of the flock is selected to be made a show of, and mamma is persuaded to consent to a thing, under the pretence of charity, which is in itself exceedingly objectionable.

“The chariest maid is prodigal enough  
If she ~~unmask~~ her beauties to the moon.”

So it was once held: and, surely, to trick out a sweet, innocent girl, and teach her to wear a marketable smile upon her face, and offer herself for admiration at twenty-five cents a head, is what no charitable results can compensate for; it strikes at the root of those modest, retiring virtues, for which American women should be loved and honoured. The extent to which these charitable bazars are being got up, and the system on which they are conducted, is a serious evil; and it would be well if the respectable portion of the press would enter their protest against them, even at the risk of being thought a little straight-laced. Let any sensible man consult his own observation in these matters, and say how far I am wide of the truth in this con-

demnation. Several years ago I attempted to draw attention to these fashionable follies in England by a trifle in rhyme, a part of which I here subjoin :

#### THE FANCY FAIR.

"Charity suffereth long," says Paul,  
But the apostle does not name  
That she sometimes stands behind a stall,  
Her *sufferings* to proclaim.  
You will know her there, at the fancy fair,  
By her light blue eyes and her auburn hair.

And who among the motley crowd  
Can tell her *heav'nly joys*,  
As she stands aloft, in her place so proud,  
Selling her trinkets and toys ?  
To the centre tent all eyes are bent,  
Upon Charity's *liveliest* ornament.

"Will you buy, kind sir, this rich bouquet ?  
You cannot think it dear ;  
And the cash, being spent on charity,  
A mountain of sins will clear.  
I wish you to know it will all of it go  
To the *funds*, just deducting the expenses or so.

"This pretty landscape, by my own hand,  
Is cheap at half a guinea ;  
'Tis a distant view of the Holy Land,  
And the Mount of Calvary."  
The buyer the while, the time to beguile,  
Buys all the trash for the sake of her smile.

And next in sight a procession appears,  
To enliven the fancy fair,  
Which is held for the use of the innocent dears  
Whose poverty 'tis to repair ;  
The trumpets sound, and about the ground  
The charity children walk round and round.

The day being over, away the folks roam  
To think of the good they have done—  
The buyers to regret their bargains at home,  
The sellers to laugh at the fun.  
The goods being paid for, as well as the ground,  
The fund is a—*loser*; just one hundred pound.

I attended two of Mr. Braham's concerts, and was not only highly gratified to hear him in such fine voice, but greatly astonished to find his powers so little impaired. There are few hours of

greater enjoyment in life than those immediately succeeding any great pleasure—before excitement has quite subsided and exhaustion succeeds. To me, there is nothing more delightful than *thinking over* music shortly after I have heard it: the strain upon the attention is then taken off—I have ceased to be nervous, lest the pleasure I feel should be interrupted by failure or accident; and my memory is busy with recalling the captivating melodies, the dramatic effects of sound, which there was not time fully to enjoy at the moment—kindly passing over those periods of weariness—those shortcomings in execution, which must occur in the best of musical performances. But such hours of revery, fascinating as they are, are not periods when a fair and dispassionate account of any exhibition of art can be given. Among the most glorious recollections of musical rapture I have the good-fortune to retain, those of Mr. Braham's "Deeper and deeper still" and "Comfort ye" are the most perfect. Eight years have elapsed since I last heard him sing the latter in Westminster Abbey; on which occasion I stood quite close to the tomb of the mighty master, whose very dust might have thrilled to the echoes of his own magnificent harmonies. All the fire of Mr. Braham's genius was still left: there was but little occasion to compare the present with the past, and I never felt more strongly convinced how difficult it is for mind to grow old. There is a certain sacredness about the "Messiah," with which no other musical composition can ever be invested; even as I am now naming it, I feel as though I were treading upon holy ground; it is, indeed, a work for immortality! In listening to this sublime composition, we are carried back to the days of old, when the Most High led his chosen people by the cloud and the fire; and when it ceases, we feel, for a moment, as though these scenes of the past were present realities.



My theatrical recollections do not carry me beyond the time when Mr. Braham, then a middle-aged man, and a little more erect than he is at present, was deservedly the principal attraction in Opera. He has since undeviatingly pursued the even *tenour* of his way, until now, after the lapse of—I decline stating how many years—he is still the undisputed King of Song. He has witnessed the rise and fall of hundreds of opponents and hundreds of imitators; and in the year eighteen hundred and forty-two he still lives and sings—unapproached and unapproachable! After this, who shall say that it is too much for me to expect that my grandson, provided my critical weaknesses continue in the family, may have to report of him! Assuredly, he has gone on so long, that there is now, as poor Power used to say in the “Irish Tutor,” “no reason why he should ever stop.” I have said that my recollections of Mr. Braham do not carry me beyond the time when he was already in the full tide of his popularity; but the following anecdote of his earlier days is so vividly impressed on my memory, and is so excellent in itself, that I cannot resist the temptation of giving it a place.

A singer of the name of Webber was a member of the Bath and Bristol companies, and one of his best characters was Paul, in “Paul and Virginia.” For novelty’s sake, while the company was at Bath Mr. Braham was brought forward; and the consequence was, that Webber was superseded in a number of his characters, and at length compelled to resign his favourite one of Paul also. He took it so much to heart, and made such a piteous appeal to his friends at Bristol, that they one and all resolved to take up arms in his defence, and in opposition to his cruel rival. “Gentlemen!” said Webber, with tears in his little gray eyes, “if the man *could sing* the music in Paul, I would not complain; but

he *can't*, gentlemen—I'll prove it to you he *cannot*; he can't sing *boldly* up to A in his natural voice; and how, gentlemen, is it possible that any man can do justice to Paul, unless he can sing *boldly* up to A in his natural voice, or, as my master used to say, *di petto*?" Many of his friends were puzzled to know what *di petto* meant, when the vocalist explained. "Bob," says one—a mate of a West Indian—“if it were only for the respect we have for you, we'd go and goose this lubber what's come down to cut you out; but since you say you can prove that he can't sing the music, nor sing up to this A—this *di petto* you talk about—if he ever has the impudence to come Master Paul over us *here*, we'll all of us go to the theatre, and, by *Saint Paul*, we'll whizz him!” At length Paul and Virginia was announced to be played in Bristol—*Paul by the hated rival*; when a whole host of Webber's friends, a number of whom were sailors, repaired to the theatre, and planting themselves in various parts of the house (the sailors in the gallery), fully determined to ascertain whether this Braham could sing *boldly* up to *di petto* in his natural voice; which if he failed to do, wo was to betide him. The afterpiece commenced, the opening duet, “See from Ocean rising,” passing off quietly enough; but when the awful moment arrived—the scene with *Ælhambra*—lo! Mr. Braham having a dreadful sore throat, the attempt was a perfect failure—a child might have detected it. On the instant, a simultaneous shout of exultation burst forth from various parts of the house: “Bob's right! Bob's right! he couldn't do it! Hurrah! he *can't* sing up to A—*di beppo*—what does Bob call it?” and the tars in the gallery gave three cheers. A considerable portion of the audience (which happened to be very numerous) couldn't conceive what was meant by the loud exclamation “Bob's right!” which, when explained,

excited, as may be readily supposed, no small mirth.

Mr. Herwig also attracted a good deal of attention by his concerts about this time : he is a violinist of great merit, and has, at times, a beautiful execution ; but his style is as vulgar as his manners, and altogether devoid of elegance and expression. His left hand is tolerably brilliant, but his bow is wanting in breadth and suppleness.

Shortly after my return from Savannah I was invited by a party of Scotch gentlemen to spend a day on Sullivan's Island : a spot of land agreeably situated a few miles from Charleston, remarkable for its salubrity, and affording to the inhabitants of the city a safe retreat during the prevalence of contagious maladies in summer. An excellent repast had been prepared at the house of Captain Robertson, one of the worthiest and most hospitable men that Caledonia ever sent forth to uphold her noble character abroad, and the day passed off amid pleasantness and good-humour. As a salutary check upon excess—which Scotchmen, however, very seldom commit—we had among our party the pastor of the principal Presbyterian Church—a man conspicuous for piety and learning, cheerfulness of disposition, and universal sympathy with man. An impression, I believe, prevails, that Presbyterian clergymen are apt to be morose and austere—unbending in their intercourse with mankind, and addicted to censoriousness and a sinister interpretation of things. This is, however, as far as I have any means of judging, a very erroneous opinion. I have associated with a great number of Scottish divines in the course of my life, and have found that, with scrupulous fidelity in the discharge of their sacred duties, they generally unite good-fellowship, love of converse, and true benevolence of character. To these qualities, Mr. Forrest, the ac-

complished pastor of the Presbyterian Church here alluded to, adds polished manners, varied acquirements in literature and science, and a passionate love for argumentative discourse. By a felicitous exercise of these qualities, he contributed to render my trip to Sullivan's Island one of the most delightful I remember in the brief history of my enjoyments.

Speaking of the Presbyterian clergy leads me, naturally enough, to advert to the state of religion in Charleston, and the different religious sects. In a late review of "Milman's History of Christianity," one of the ablest works of modern times, I took occasion to observe, and it appears to me to be an incontrovertible fact, that the religious teachers of the present day possess just that degree of general intelligence which lays them open to all influences, and puts to the severest proof the integrity and simplicity of their spirit, as the messengers of God to man—I say, just that degree of intelligence; for it must not be affirmed (after a few exceptions have been made) that the mental power and accomplishments of the religious body, or of its leaders, are so fairly on a par with the learning and science of the times, as to leave no room for the consciousness of inferiority. It is not with us as it was in the age of the Reformation, when the champions of the Gospel were men of gigantic understanding and unrivalled attainments—men who had no competitors to fear in any walk of learning—men who ruled the philosophy as well as the religion of their times. Nor is it as it was in the times of Jerome, and Augustine, and Ambrose, and Gregory, and Chrysostom, when, to use Mr. Milman's elegant expression, "The church moved foremost on all ground of honour and merit, and pagan philosophy had scarcely a laurel left on its brow." The clergy now stand midway between rude, ingen-

uous fervour, and unequalled eminence in matters of science and learning. But a *middle* position is here one of hazard, incertitude, and timidity. By all the amount of their actual intelligence they feel the offence of the cross; and yet their intelligence reaches not the point which would set them free from anxiety in bearing it. No intelligent man, who has seriously resolved to devote himself unreservedly to the Christian ministry, will consider any kind of knowledge, or of mental aptitude or discipline, as foreign or inapplicable to his work. There is, in fact, nothing in literature or science—no truths so abstruse or profound in philosophy—no power of deep and patient thought, which may not be made of excellent use in this great work.

There was a time when it was seriously maintained that clergymen had no need of learning; and for the reason, it was said, that God had no need of man's knowledge for accomplishing his mysterious purposes; and I well remember Dr. South's quaint reply to such a reasoner, "Then has he less need of man's ignorance." The time was, too, when inquiries into the laws of nature were denounced as impious attempts to unveil what Infinite Wisdom meant should be concealed; and when the truths resulting from such inquiries were stigmatized as heresy, and their audacious promulgators punished as infidels. The same spirit still survives; it "is not dead, but sleepeth;" and occasional exhibitions of it are still to be met with in the words and works of men who have no true perception of the character and design of Revelation, but torture it from its proper meaning, and strangely seek to establish a contradiction between the physical creations of God and his Divine Word. It would be easy to show that religious belief and physical truth rest upon totally different foundations; that, as it regards their proofs, they are quite independent one of the other,

though physical science, so far as it has any bearing upon the facts of Revelation, has decidedly corroborated instead of contradicting them.

The credibility of the Christian religion depends upon evidence both internal and external. The internal evidence of its truth is to be found in the consistency and unity of its design, through all its successive manifestations; in its moral purity and dignity; in its exalted motives, fitted to call forth man's highest and best energies; in its adaptation to his weaknesses and his wants; in its laying bare the most secret movements of the heart; in its developments in regard to a future state, and other truths most important for man to know, and yet of which he must be entirely ignorant, or have but a faint and insufficient knowledge from the light of nature. Its external evidences are connected in various ways with its internal, but finally resolve themselves into the strength of human testimony, proving that God has at various times directly and visibly manifested his power upon earth—announced to mankind a rule of life, which he has enforced by penal sanctions, and the truth and reality of which he has confirmed by miracles publicly wrought and testified to by many witnesses. Physical science, on the contrary, receives no support from internal evidence or external testimony, but is based entirely on experiment, perfected by induction, and drawn out into propositions by a rational logic of its own. To confound the grounds of philosophy and religion, therefore, is to destroy both, since the bases on which they rest, as well as their design, are entirely distinct; and we may assume it as an incontrovertible truth, that neither can the inductions of philosophy be proved by Revelation, nor the doctrines of Revelation be supported by the investigations of natural science.

The opinion was lately advanced by an eminent

English divine, Dr. Croly, that Christendom was about falling into a general apostacy, which would be visited by some awful punishment, and that afterward a new and more glorious course of Providence would commence. The signs of this approaching apostacy were not stated, and, in America at least, it would be difficult to discover any; for there is no country or nation where religion is more revered. In Europe, the introduction of the Kantian philosophy has revolutionized everything, and religion has deeply felt its influence. The sublime facts of Scriptural history and the wildest speculations of enthusiasm have been alike subjected to its ordeal: Alexander subverting the Persian Empire at Arbela, and Diogenes rolling his tub at Corinth—Napoleon crossing the Alps, and Abigail Folsom lecturing on the rights of women at Boston, are all but parts of a complicated machinery, working out the succession of ideas and the development of intellect. Skeptical France convulsed Europe, notwithstanding the inherent coldness and repulsiveness of doubt; and there is strong probability that the new creed, whose principles are peculiarly calculated to nurture enthusiasm, and, perhaps, a spirit of propagandism, is destined to have no small influence on the future history of Europe. But in America, the practical application of this new philosophy, whether in faith or in fact, has never yet been felt.

Next to the blessing of a total cessation of controversy—a consummation not to be looked for in our day—is the display of a conciliatory Christian spirit among the religious teachers of different persuasions—a sign of improvement in the character of the age, which I never saw so strongly manifested as in Charleston. I certainly have never anywhere seen so little of that sectarian uncharitableness which has long dimmed the glories of Christi-

anity, and caused the sincere disciples of the Saviour, of whatever name, who would, if possible, live in peace with all men, to lament and mourn. This praiseworthy spirit of mutual forbearance is, I am informed, chiefly to be ascribed to the excellent example of the late Bishop England, who commanded the admiration and esteem of all who knew him, Protestants as well as Catholics. I had the good fortune of listening to the farewell sermon of this distinguished prelate previous to his leaving for Europe ; and never have I seen an audience more perfectly electrified by " thoughts that breathe and words that burn," than was that brought together on this occasion to receive his parting words. It was a discourse so brilliant, powerful, and eloquent, and, withal, so imbued throughout with the pure and holy spirit of Christian charity, that all present were affected to tears. The occasion was, indeed, an extraordinary one : there was nothing conventional about it. It was not a mere formal assembling of parishioners, but appeared rather like a gathering of affectionate, anxious children around a kind and doting parent of whom they were about to be bereft—to receive his paternal blessing and his parting counsels. Every eye beamed with affection ; every lip quivered as if the heart within were heaving with deep emotions, and gloom and despondency sat on every brow. The amiable prelate was evidently conscious of the deep sorrow that pervaded the audience ; for he had frequently to stop in the midst of the most pathetic passages to wipe away the teardrop that gushed to his eye. In my whole life I had never beheld religion so transcendently beautiful. It was a scene to stagger the veriest skeptic !

When we find the great doctrine of Christian charity so fervently, impressively, and beautifully exemplified and inculcated as it was by Bishop Eng-



land, it is no matter of astonishment that new proselytes should daily flock around the standard of the Catholic faith. That this is actually the case, no man who has paid the smallest attention to the progress of events can question. Roman Catholicism is, in fact, gaining ground everywhere. Roused from the slumber of ages, after being humbled by a long course of privation and suffering, she again stretches forth her arms in all the consciousness of primeval purity and strength, showing that the soil of the religious world is ever teeming with truth—that the seed, though at times unable to develop itself, is always there; and that, sooner or later, it will burst forth in all the beauty and loveliness of the perfect plant.

It has been the fashion with writers who delight more in exhibiting the deformities than the merits of their subject, to attribute all the proceedings of the Romish Church, in her days of prosperity and pride, to the love of power and an inordinate desire to domineer—to represent her, in short, as a ravening wild beast; forgetting that most of the acts of which they complain were performed in a sincere belief that they were based upon the rights of the Church, and were for the best good of the souls of men—that the sanctity of the gown was then the only protection against the tyranny of the sword—Religion the only availing antagonist to feudal despotism; and that it was necessary that the Church should be made a substantive, independent power, to enable her to compete with the violence and cruelty of times, when violence and cruelty were rife to an extent of which, at present, we can have no adequate conception. Even Pope Hildebrand, whose extravagant assumption of authority has been so universally reprobated by historians, deserves for this the gratitude of posterity, that he set the first example of

organized resistance to despotism ; and though he made no effort to establish liberty, he at least raised a power, under whose protection *free principles* could germinate. The changes that successively took place led, at length, to a state of things, in which the power of the Church became an engine of oppression ; nor could it be otherwise after it was leagued with the State. This circumstance is, however, overlooked by most writers, who merely regard the evils that arose from ecclesiastical domination united with regal despotism, without considering how greatly it must have tended to alleviate civil thralldom. Religion could never have been made an instrument of imposition and tyranny, had not the minds of men been previously subjected to numerous debasing circumstances. Truth can be corrupted only when it ceases to be generally valued or understood. Spiritual tyranny may be temporarily supported by force, but it can never be permanently established by mere force ; and no bishop of Rome, though his power had been tenfold what it was, could have compelled the people, against their wishes, to receive a new article into their creed, or to reject one which they believed should be retained.

The rapid strides of Catholicism in our day, and the ascendancy which the Church of Rome is fast gaining everywhere, are the inevitable consequences of that system of corruption which has crept into the different Protestant establishments, whereby the churches of Luther and of Calvin are deprived of that full portion of intellectual power, as well as of spiritual effort, which they have a right to expect from the great body of their clergy. There can be but one opinion as to the general principle which should prevail in the management of the means provided for promoting the interests of religion ; but manifest as it is that the support of an

efficient and independent body of ministers should be the first great object for which the wealth of the Church should be expended, we find in every Protestant establishment the same fearful evil which has proved so ruinous wherever it has existed : I mean, of course, the simony of political patronage, which, for the promise of so much help in the support of a particular measure, will transfer so many thousand souls to the charge of, perhaps, the most unlearned and most worldly-minded of the ministers of the Church. The dire spirit of Antichrist was never more clearly exhibited, in the worst periods of Romish corruption, than it has been in the unchecked use which the government of England, or the agents of that government, in their several degrees, have been allowed to make of Church patronage to effect their political ends. In some instances, the sin of the politician has infected the ruling members of the Church itself ; and the cedar and the gold of the temple have been surreptitiously taken away, even by those who dwelt therein, to reward labourers unworthy of the meanest hire.

Mr. Abbott having at length returned with his company from Savannah, the Charleston theatre was reopened at reduced prices, and towards the middle of May I made my first bow in "Othello." The audiences were far inferior to those at Savannah both in character and numbers ; and, notwithstanding the friendly tone of the "Charleston Courier," and the eulogistic articles which appeared in the "Patriot," the engagement lingered on with very little advantage either to the management or myself. I had the consolation of knowing, however, that Mr. Forrest had not been more successful at a more propitious season of the year, and that the theatre was actually closed on three or four evenings when that great actor had been announced to play, for want of a sufficiently numerous audi-

ence. During my engagement at the Charleston theatre, I noticed in the audience an excessively bad trait, which is wholly unworthy of a generous and high-minded people. I allude to the villanous system of *guying* an actor who happens not to be in favour. A gentleman of Mr. Abbott's company was nightly annoyed by this dastardly species of persecution—an outrage which excited my indignation, and might at last have induced me to address the audience in behalf of the victim, had not the unfortunate individual himself taken the task into his own hands, on my benefit night, when Hamlet was played, and so exasperated his tormentors by the injudiciousness of his remarks, that, when the time came for me to despatch him (he played Claudius), the pit set up such tremendous shouts of joy that the remainder of the play passed off in mere dumb-show. Now, had his majesty of Denmark addressed his rebellious subjects in the pit in appropriate terms, no doubt the ~~the~~ <sup>people</sup> would have been turned in his favour; but, finding that he had lost his royal temper, they became more uproarious than ever. There is some policy to be used to convince people that they are wrong, even when the injury inflicted is of a gross and scandalous nature. The practice of *guying*, however, is atrocious in the extreme: it is founded on the very worst feelings that debase humanity. If an actor be found deficient in talent or in memory, an audience has the right to evince its disapprobation by hissing; for they have come to the theatre to receive a certain amount of amusement or instruction as an equivalent for the money paid at the door, and they should not be disappointed either by downright incapacity or wilful neglect. But *guying* a man who is doing all in his power to please, and whom the short-sightedness of the manager has forced into a false position, is an indication of a bad heart, and can tend

only to bring the drama and the profession into disrepute.

I have more than once, I believe, alluded to the unexceptionable character of the Southern press, and the respect paid to the sanctities of private life by Southern journalists. If at any time an attempt has been made to introduce that deleterious kind of reading which is so popular at the North, it has always been attended with disastrous results to the adventurer. Indignant denunciations and ignominious chastisement have uniformly followed every effort to break down those salutary barriers behind which society has intrenched itself. The foul system of espionage so successfully practised by unprincipled letter-writers in Northern cities has been found so perilous to all who have ventured upon it, that the most desperate find no temptation to engage in it. The spirit of the entire South is, in short, opposed to all violation of the privacies of life: the public press of Charleston is remarkable for its lofty tone, and its moderation in all things. Still, even in the midst of this well-regulated community, an insane attempt was made, about this time, to establish a paper on principles in direct opposition to public sentiment and the public good. The editor, a wretched journeyman printer, who had been driven from the North for misconduct, began by putting forth a prospectus, in which he described, in the gloomiest colours, the evils of the social system, and announced his determination to revolutionize society by a fearless exposure of vice. As an earnest of his patriotism and the purity of his motives, he proceeded to make an indecent attack upon some of the most virtuous citizens in the place, which was followed by a summary castigation, with a gentle hint that, if he should be found committing a similar misdemeanour again, he might expect a visit from the tar and feather committee. This might be

thought a very indecorous mode of proceeding against a man whose exalted principles led him to undertake, single handed, the extirpation of all moral evil. Here was a glorious opportunity for the editor to speculate on the ingratitude of mankind in general, and of the Charleston people in particular; and as the sheet appeared only once a week, he had ample time to meditate upon the subject at leisure. Accordingly, the next issue contained a piteous appeal to the virtuous and well-disposed, reminding them, among other things, that the most efficient way of preventing a man from treading in the crooked paths of iniquity, was to encourage him to travel on the straight road of righteousness; or, in other words, that they should subscribe for the said appellant's journal. Now, this argument was certainly unanswerable; and I have no doubt, had the petitioner applied for the situation of scavenger with so subtle a plea, that the application would have been completely successful. The citizens of Charleston, however, were either incapable of appreciating the importance of so valuable an accession to the press of the city, or had some motive they did not choose to divulge for withholding their patronage. I know not how it happened, but certain it is that the appeal, notwithstanding its melting eloquence, was altogether disregarded. Our editor, then waxing monstrously indignant, threatened an immediate eruption of the most awful disclosures, unless he was supplied, *nilly willy*, with the means of buying his bread and butter. This was the crowning incident of his editorial career: he never was heard of afterward! Thus will ever terminate all attempts made at the South to invade the peace of families by the introduction of scurrilous journals.

It was late in May before I had any serious thoughts of proceeding northward, when a slight attack of bilious fever reminded me that it was time

to be stirring. I accordingly started for Richmond as soon as I was sufficiently recovered to bear the fatigues of the journey.

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## CHAPTER XXV.

Passage to Wilmington.—Pindar.—Thoughts thereon.—His Translators.—Opposition Lines.—Lies of the Trade.—James's "Corse de Leon."—Faultiness of that Novel.—Second Attack of Sickness.—Recovery.—Character of Virginians.—Richmond in Virginia, and Richmond in England.—Magnificent Views from both Places.—A Parallel.—Shako Hill and Richmond Terrace.—The Capitol.—The Library.—Interesting Conversation with the Librarian.—The old Virginia Assembly.—Patrick Henry.—Daniel Webster at the great Convention.—Statue of General Washington by Houdon.—Dissertation on the Term "Ideal Beauty."—The Fine Arts above the Sphere of Criticism.—Richmond Medical College.—Reflections on witnessing a Surgical Operation.—On the present Systems of conveying Anatomical Knowledge.—The Richmond Theatre.—Mismanagement of George Jones, and its Consequences on the Drama.—Lecture.—Leave for Washington.—Members of Congress and their Conversation.—Fredericksburgh and its Vicinity.—Virginia Pride.—Anecdote of the Treasurer of North Carolina.—The Potomac Creek.

THE passage to Wilmington was delightful beyond description. The cloudless skies and the bracing wind, which was just stiff enough to curl the billows as they came rolling against the boat, had a most exhilarating effect upon my spirits. I remained on deck almost the whole time: in fact, it was just the weather when a well-flavoured Regalia and an occasional glimpse at a pocket edition of Tom Moore or of Pindar, are the most sensible things that a man can indulge in. I was happily provided with the latter, and never did the lyrical effusions of the old Greek appear more enchanting. Poor Pindar! his fame has certainly not increased with time: he was the poet of the last age of Grecian

chivalry, when aristocracy was still flourishing—when princes were everything and the people nothing. He was completely the poet of courts, and certainly the greatest that ever condescended to act as laureate; but the deeds he had to celebrate were merely the victories of the national games—the triumphs of a chariot-race or a boxing-match. In this age the Olympic and Pythian games were in the zenith of their glory, and, consequently, his contemporaries felt no surprise at the magnificent strains in which he celebrated deeds that, in a more advanced stage of society, could scarcely attract casual notice; and they were prepared to enjoy his splendid allusions to the rich stores of Grecian legends, because the families to whom these traditions belonged still enjoyed their hereditary distinction. But when the Persian and Peloponnesian wars had destroyed the whole framework of Grecian society, there was no existing sympathy with the spirit of the poet's compositions: they were still admired for sublimity of style and gorgeousness of diction; but no one sought them from feeling an interest in their subject. If this was the case in Greece itself, still less would it be expected that Pindar should ever be popular in foreign lands. Beyond the precincts of Hellas he has been more praised than read; more admired than quoted; more frequently imitated than translated. The peculiar characteristics of his genius, fervid, enthusiastic, and disdaining control; his daring invention, his colossal groups of imagery, his irregular metre, and his bold combination of new epithets, present difficulties that might well terrify a modern translator. Cowley broke down in the attempt: West's Odes are very beautiful, but they have not the spirit of Pindar: Gray's Progress of Poesy is, perhaps, the best example of a Pindaric ode in our language. If strict fidelity to the text, with the per-



fect preservation of the author's spirit, be the test of excellence in translation, Cary's Pindar must rank among the most successful.

We reached Wilmington early in the morning, and had to wait at the railroad dépôt for nearly two hours before the cars were ready to start ; but the spot commanded such a superb view of the country around, and the newly-risen sun shed so many glories on the landscape, that I could have lingered there till night without the least weariness or impatience. A very amusing scene occurred at the dépôt, which, however, reflects but little credit on the age we live in. It appears that there had existed during the present season a mortal feud between the proprietors of two lines of cars that ran by opposite routes : flaming handbills and abusive placards had for some time edified the travelling public ; lies were circulated by the bushel, and bitter denunciations put forth without mercy, until it was utterly impossible to judge which was the safest road to travel on, or who was the lesser scoundrel of the set. At the Wilmington dépôt, however, the war was carried on in a more business-like manner ; there the hostile parties appeared in *propria persona*, and regaled each other with the most atrocious epithets that ever befouled the lips of man. Each was labouring to make it appear that the other was imposing upon the public, and that, by giving that said *other* the preference, detention and inconvenience would be sure to follow. These amiable discussions seldom failed to terminate in a round or two of fisticuffs, when the poor persecuted travellers had no other alternative but to make a ring and enjoy the sport. As I am always disposed to doubt the veracity of the loudest talkers whenever there is a case of difference between two disputants, I made a surrender of my sympathies to the agent of the Welden train, who,

besides being the meekest and the most polite, had a far more reasonable rate of fare than his competitor.

Between Wilmington and Richmond I passed that portion of my time not employed in thinking of nothing—one of the most delightful railroad past-times I know of—in perusing James's novel of "Corse de Leon," which, although abounding in the usual hair-breadth 'scapes, and unexpected joys and sorrows to be found in works of this class, disappointed me greatly. The style of the narrative is certainly very flowing, and sometimes spirited, and many of the descriptions of scenery are striking and vivid; but the plot is rapid, and the characters are drawn without any regard to probability or nature. If I could be induced to excuse the want of that first requisite of a story—an original and well-managed plot—it would only be by graphic and brilliant delineations of character, or such glowing descriptions of the scenery and manners of distant lands and other times, as would place them full before me; or by such ingenious philosophizing as sometimes converts a feeble novel into a tolerable treatise. Now in "Corse de Leon," although the author has attempted all these—plot, philosophizing, and delineation of character—he has succeeded in none of them. There are some beautiful isolated passages, and occasional snatches of fine sentiment, but, as a work of art, it is infinitely below the usual standard of James's writings, and certainly unworthy his great reputation. An author like James, who is comfortable at home, eats in quiet, sips his wine luxuriously, and takes a walk within the bounds of his own garden, has no right to trouble the world with crude or hastily-written books.

By the time I reached Richmond I was again the victim of such intense bodily suffering, that,

without stopping a moment to inquire as to the character of the different hotels in the city, I suffered myself to be conducted to the nearest at hand, which turned out to be a temperance house. Nor was I sorry for the mistake ; for, during my sojourn of two weeks at this house, I saw more eccentricity, and a greater number of original characters, than could have fallen under my notice anywhere else.

Strong symptoms of bilious fever were again threatening to arrest my journey northward ; but after a few days' careful nursing, during which I received all possible kindness and attention, I was once more in a state of convalescence, and able to move about to amuse myself and get a little fresh air. This illness, short as it was, gave me an opportunity of seeing more of the Virginia character than I could have done under different circumstances : it was the means of calling forth acts of generous sympathy, which I shall ever remember with gratitude, and which made me feel that I had lost much in not being able to remain longer among a people distinguished alike by the noblest attributes of humanity and the most exalted qualities of the understanding. Without any letters of introduction, or the advantage even of the slightest acquaintance, I was waited upon by some of the most respectable citizens of the place, who vied with each other in rendering me every civility, and in doing whatever was in their power to promote my happiness and comfort. Among those to whom I am specially indebted for many pleasant hours and numberless acts of kindness, I cannot avoid mentioning Mr. Cowardin of the "Compiler." Were I to write a novel, and wished to hold up a picture of genuine benevolence to the admiration of my readers, I would select this gentleman for my model ; for he possesses more of those qualities which constitute real goodness in the human character than I ever found united in any other individual.

There is an air of exact propriety about Richmond that is quite peculiar. It occupies one of the healthiest sites in America; and if some master-spirit would only undertake to have the streets rendered less dismal at night, either by the help of gas or lamp-oil—for at present people have to grope their way in the darkest nights without a ray of light to guide them—there would be little wanting to make this city a truly charming place. In many respects the capital of Virginia bears a strong resemblance to Richmond in England: there is a most delightful spot called Shako Hill, from which the view is even finer and more interesting than the celebrated one from Richmond Terrace in the other hemisphere; for here you have a considerable space of picturesque foreground, stretching out immediately from the spot on which you stand, while the distant landscape is scarcely less beautiful and striking. In looking at a view from an abrupt height, there is an unpleasant feeling of distance and loneliness; while the view itself receives from its isolation a character of artificialness which reminds you of a picture—and this should never be the case. The perfection of a picture consists in its giving you the ideas and feelings arising from a real landscape; but a landscape ought never to suggest the idea of a picture.

Shako Hill, with its immediate vicinity, is a very favourite spot among those families who make Richmond their residence during the entire year; and great pains have been evidently taken to render it as attractive as possible. The view presented from this point combines every possible kind of beauty in landscape; and this it is which constitutes its superiority over the well-known view from Richmond Hill in England; the latter possessing but a single kind of beauty. Here the eye ranges over a fertile plain, studded with villages and countless farmhouses, the prospect being terminated in the

distance by a range of beautiful hills. There is no natural feature wanting to make it perfectly enchanting; though in detail, art might, perhaps, do much to enhance the effect of the whole. The view from Richmond Hill in England is very fine, and has a perfectly classical air peculiar to itself, and is certainly very striking in its way; but then it is not at all adapted to the climate, and is altogether deficient in the charms which the association of ideas gives to external scenery. You stand on the top of a natural terrace, planted with stately elms, which form a kind of framework to the picture, and through these you look down on swelling masses of foliage, rising immediately beneath you, and stretching out without any apparent limits in all directions. From a mass of this foliage on the right, the river seems to rise as if from a subterranean source, and, gliding gently along in the midst of the scene, is again abruptly lost to view before it reaches the termination of what forms the foreground, seeming to sink into the earth, as it before seemed to rise from it. The banks of the river consist of a bright green turf, extending to the water's edge, and not having the slightest perceptible elevation above its level. This gives an air of quiet repose in harmony with the rest of the scene; but it is this very thing which prevents it from being as picturesque and attractive as it would otherwise be. In fact, the whole front part of that view is a perfect flat; and, except on the borders of the river, where the green turf peeps out now and then in bright smooth patches, it is one continued mass of foliage—disposed, it is true, in a perfectly natural manner, and without the slightest appearance of regular planting, and therefore rising into unequal heights, and presenting a diversified aspect, but still with scarcely the slightest relief from the intermixture of champaign country and of open

spaces, with cattle, roads, mills, village spires, country seats, or anything else indicative of the presence of animal life. Even where you do discover traces of habitations, either by the smoke issuing from their chimneys, or by parts of the buildings being seen, it is always in the midst of thick foliage, beneath which they seem buried. Under an Italian sky, this kind of scenery, though continued through an extensive view, would, by association merely, produce a charming effect; but here, where the difficulty is to catch a gleam of sunshine, not to escape from it, the effect of such superabundance of foliage is not good. Clumps of it at intervals, with patches of meadow or of cultivated land between—as they occur in the Virginian scenery, more gracefully blended than in any other—always produce a delightful effect, similar to that felt in gazing on the variegated beauty of a blue sky, with patches of cloud of various forms and hues scattered over it. But in the English scene of which I am speaking, it is, as it were, all cloud, which gives to it much too sombre an aspect. It is the same with the distant views which complete this rich and certainly harmonious picture: as they recede, they soften off beyond each other in a most exquisite manner, till you can scarcely distinguish the last from the blue sky, with which it seems blended; still, it is scarcely anything but foliage. This, while it gives unity of effect, and, at the same time, an air of deep contemplative beauty and of elegant repose to the whole, does not constitute exactly the kind of scenery one likes best to look on immediately after leaving a great city: the contrast is too abrupt. Such opposite scenes, and the associations they call up, are so contradictory to each other, that there is no sort of agreement between them, and, consequently, no sympathy felt by persons decidedly partial to either.

There is no shading off—no melting into one another. One or the other of them must give dissatisfaction; and we perplex ourselves to know which, till we become displeased with both. Even the river, which constitutes the chief beauty of the scene, does not give a character of animation to it. It does not seem in motion, but to be stagnant in the midst of it—like a clear, smooth mirror—for the trees, clouds, and sky to look at and admire each other.

But, after all, the most glorious view of the picturesque environs of Richmond in Virginia is to be had from the library windows of the Capitol; and it is impossible for mere words to convey an adequate idea of it. The spots, however, which most riveted my attention in this gorgeous picture, were those that have been consecrated by historical associations—by the achievements of those noble patriots who, in the days of the Revolution, signalized themselves by acts of self-devotion, worthy the brightest names of antiquity. The librarian, who was possessed of an inexhaustible fund of information and anecdote, and whose manners were particularly agreeable, entertained me for several hours with his instructive conversation, while at times, the enthusiasm with which he spoke almost brought the events he was so eloquently describing visibly before me. He seemed to take particular delight in pointing to the spot where the old Virginia Assembly—the most dignified body of men that ever met to deliberate—held their sessions, and where Patrick Henry—the most wonderful man of that stirring period—by his extraordinary command over the passions, and his profound knowledge of human nature, revolutionized so many minds—some of them even superior in strength and power to his own. No wonder, with so many objects in view calculated to rouse the imagination and deeply

move the soul, that Daniel Webster, in addressing the citizens of Richmond from the steps of the Capitol at the late Convention, was so carried away by the enthusiasm with which he was inspired, that the thousands who thronged around him were completely entranced by his eloquence, and scarcely able to give vent to their feelings by acclamation.

In descending from the Library, and immediately fronting the door of the Chamber of Delegates, the first object that met my view was a statue of General Washington by a French artist, of the name of Houdon. The great liberator is here represented in his ordinary costume; and as a work of art, this statue is worthy to stand beside the choicest specimens of sculpture that the genius of Canova or of Chantrey ever produced. Indeed, after having examined this beautiful production of the chisel in every part, I am of opinion that probably a more intense study, a profounder knowledge of art, and a deeper feeling of the beautiful as it exists in Nature, were put in requisition by the artist, than are displayed in any of the works of antiquity; or, in other words, without reference to the skill employed upon it, and viewed merely as an object calculated to make a permanent impression upon the heart, that this sublime statue ranks above them all. One capable of appreciating sculptural art justly, may pass a day in looking at the Apollo Belvidere or the Venus de Medici, and leave them with no other feelings than those of present and immediate delight; but he cannot stand for an hour before this statue by Houdon without being made wiser, better, and happier: I do not mean that it has more of what is called *ideal beauty*, but that it has something superior to beauty—something loftier—more imaginative—more un-earthly.

This term "ideal beauty," by-the-by, is perpetually in the mouths of critics everywhere; yet they



are puzzled themselves, and perplex everybody else, in determining what it means: and well they may be; for, in fact, it means nothing at all—it is a contradiction in terms. It is intended to mark a distinction which they fancy is to be discovered between the beauty of nature and that of art; but there is no such distinction—there can be none. Everything that is beautiful in art is to be found somewhere, and I think in at least an equal degree, beautiful in nature. I am persuaded, for example, that there is nothing in art so expressive and so beautiful as some human faces which I have myself seen. But then there is, perhaps, nothing in nature equal to some works of art, as combinations of beauty: and this is all that can be meant, or, at least, that ought to be meant, by ideal beauty. It is *select* beauty, and nothing more: it must have its various prototypes somewhere in nature, or it is not beauty at all.

I do not think that the Greeks had any notion of ideal beauty, as distinguished from real or natural. They selected from nature, and then created from their selections: witness the Helen of Zeuxis. But they did not attempt to engender an artificial beauty in their own minds, because they knew that the imagination itself, with all its wondrous powers, is incapable of creating anything that will permanently affect the human mind, the rudiments of which did not previously exist somewhere in nature. The Venus is the most perfect statue in existence, not because it possesses a beauty superior to, or different from that of nature, but because it combines the largest amount of select natural beauty; and this beauty can be considered as ideal only so far as it is not a *portrait*—not a copy from, but an imitation of, nature. A portrait can, perhaps, never be perfect except *as* a portrait. It may be said that nothing in art which *is* a copy, or is *not* an

imitation of nature, can be perfect. And, admitting the first part of this axiom to be true, the works of nature are not, therefore, imperfect ; for all the rudiments of perfection exist in her ; and she has given to man the mechanical power to combine them, and the mental power to appreciate them when they are combined.

I have no great affection for the "*triste métier de critique*" when it is employed about the highest productions of the fine arts. They are, in fact, not subjects for criticism at all : they are above its sphere. It is the general feeling of mankind—the light that is within us, that must appreciate them. That which contains no beauty but what it requires the eye of the critic to find out, contains none at all. All the criticism in the world never made a single real lover of the fine arts ; but it has made hosts of amateurs and connoisseurs—worshippers of a man—stringers of phrases—chatterers about *gusto*, *chiaro-scuro*, the *beau idéal*, and so forth. Still, these persons have no real love for the fine arts—they can have none ; because real love, whatever may be the object of it, springs from the depths of the heart ; and these people have no hearts ; and if they ever had, have talked them away, or bartered them for a string of technical phrases. When once the few fundamental principles of art are known, then the taste that is got by reading books of criticism is like the morality that is acquired by reading books of casuistry, namely, something worse than none at all ; for criticism is to beauty in art just what metaphysics is to truth in morals : it makes "no light, but rather darkness visible." Criticism, like everything else, is very well in its place ; but, like everything else, it does not exactly know where its place is. The sublimities of M. Angelo are beyond its reach ; the divine forms of Raphael were not made to be meddled with by its

unhallowed fingers ; the ineffable expressions of Correggio must not be sullied by its mundane breath : they were given to the world for something better ; and they have fulfilled their bidding hitherto, and will do it to the end of time. They have opened a perpetual spring of lofty thoughts and pure meditations ; they have blended themselves with the very existence, and become a living principle in the heart of mankind ; and they are now no more fit to be touched and tampered with than the stars of heaven ; for, like them, "*levan di terra al cielo nostr' intelletto.*"

During my short stay at Richmond I paid two visits to the Medical College, which is considered the very best in the United States ; and I am bound to say, that whatever I saw was calculated to favour that opinion. The different professors are men of eminent practical talent, and no stranger can go the round of the Infirmary without carrying away some new knowledge, or receiving some valuable hint which he may find serviceable in after life. On one occasion I was witness to a surgical operation, performed in the clinical ward, and never was I so forcibly struck with the beauty, strength, and wonderful symmetry of the human frame : it was, indeed, a time for serious thought and self-humiliation ! When the mind of man, I said to myself, has, in the immensity of astronomical speculation, struggled after the conception of orb beyond orb and cycle beyond cycle, till its limited powers fail, and exhausted imagination sinks back to our own little world or our own diminutive selves, into what insignificance do we not dwindle ! It seems incredible that beings so inconsiderable should attract the notice of that Mind whence originated the mighty wonders we have been contemplating : "The earth, with man upon it, does not seem much other than an anthill, where some ants carry corn, and some carry their

young, and some go empty, and all go to and from a little heap of dust." But when we consider how fearfully and wonderfully we are made—when we estimate the beauty and delicacy of our structure, the exact symmetry and relation of our parts, their skilful adaptation to our wants, to the circumstances in which we are placed, and the bodies by which we are surrounded, we become assured that we have not been overlooked in the creation. Indeed, so much of forethought and careful provision is apparent in the framing of our bodies—so much evident prospective design in the formation of every member, that we feel an ennobling confidence that they were written one by one in the Book of Nature, "when as yet there was none of them." Such a view reconciles us to our seeming insignificance; it shows us to ourselves in the true light, as God's masterpiece of workmanship—as the first of all created beings; it shows that the world was made for us, and we for the world; and ever, as it discovers to us our true relation to external bodies, it enlarges our admiration for that benevolent Creator who makes "all things work together for good."

The course of anatomical instruction at the Medical College of Richmond is much more rational than that generally pursued elsewhere: it is less repulsive and more philosophical; but yet it is not all that it might be, if our professors of anatomy, physiology, and surgery would condescend to make the most approved systems of French instruction their study. The English and American systems have hitherto tended to render a science which should be delightful, absolutely disgusting: so much so, indeed, that, were it not for the stimulus of necessity, few who commence the study of anatomy, as at present taught, would have constancy and firmness to persevere so as to obtain the reward of their labours in a mature acquaintance with its wonders.

A student, on entering for the first time the lecture-room of a professor of anatomy, might naturally expect that, as he was commencing a study totally new, he would be furnished with some general indications of its nature and design—some graphic outlines of its character and its leading divisions, together with some clew or link by which it might be connected with his previous knowledge. But, to his astonishment, he meets with nothing of all this. The professor, deep himself in the mysteries of organization, conceives that the student should forthwith be so too; and if he be of the old Hallerian school, will treat him to a dissertation upon the “elementary fibre”—which has never been either seen, felt, heard, or (I may add) understood: or, if he be more of a microscopic physiologist, will give him an account of molecules or globules some two thousandth part of an inch in diameter, which, he tells him, he may detect, if he have clear sight, a good lens, and a bright, sunshiny day, imbedded in a certain amorphous substance; and that this is the simplest form in which matter exists in organized beings. But if he be a chemist, he will push his analysis still farther, and at the moment when the pupil is expecting some view of man in his totality, he will see him put into a crucible, and brought out, now an earthy particle—now a gas—a *caput mortuum*—an insoluble residuum—till at last he may fancy he has found a new meaning for the text, “Man’s life is a vapour,” or tacitly acknowledge the physical truth of the poet’s moralizing reflection, “*Pulvis et umbra sumus!*” Meantime, as regards advance in the science, he is completely at a stand. Between what he now learns and all his former ideas there is a wide gulf fixed; so that, when he would pass from the one to the other, he cannot. Accustomed to behold man living, feeling, thinking, moving—exercising all the functions of animal and

organic life—surrounded by multitudes of other beings to whom he has innumerable relations—influencing and being influenced, acting and suffering, compelled to exertion himself, and the cause of exertion in others—he utterly fails to recognise him when presented from the furnace, or beneath the microscope, divested of every circumstance that had given him interest—stripped of his beauty and his strength—reduced to a desolate abstraction—matter without form, structure without vitality—a brute mass,

“Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything.”

This is a total *bouleversement* of all the principles of teaching, in which, every one will allow, we ought to proceed from things more known to things less known, and seek to connect our ideas by well-understood middle terms. But there are many abstract propositions, universally allowed and never acted on. Anatomists will, because they must, admit the truth of what I have laid down; yet they stubbornly pursue a course of instruction, of which, if they ever, reflected, they must themselves have experienced the ill effects, and cram the mind of the pupil with a number of isolated facts, which he retains by no other means than a strong exertion of memory—totally ignorant of their mutual dependance and bearing, and therefore incapable of applying them to any train of reasoning, until, with great pain, and after the labour, perhaps, of many months, he has worked out for himself a few general views of the human frame, into which, almost to his own utter astonishment, his scattered ideas fit and dovetail, like pieces of a dissected map, which a child easily puts together, so as to form one whole, when once he has completed the exterior border. A practitioner of great experience and skill in New-York told me, that, when pursuing the study of

which I now speak, he found himself to have made more progress towards real efficient knowledge in a very few hours, than he had with constant and toilsome exertion for some months preceding; and those hours were the hours in which he first apprehended the point of contact between what he had just learned and what he had formerly known, and saw how to apply to living and moving man the facts gleaned from the dissecting-room. Such a phasis is to be gone through in the mind, I would say, of almost every diligent, reflecting anatomical student; until it has taken place, he is employed in the collection of barren and apparently uninteresting facts; but, when once it has occurred, every fact becomes instructive and delightful: he no sooner sees a muscle than he infers an action—no sooner traces a nervous connexion than he concludes a sympathy—every roughness on a bone has its object and utility—every inequality of surface its definite aim and end: he no longer remembers—he reasons; he is no longer an anatomist—he is a physiologist.

Why, then, has he not commenced as such? Simply from the obviously defective mode in which he has been taught. The science is attempted to be conveyed in a manner diametrically opposite to that in which it has been learned: the last term attained in anatomical knowledge is the first presented to the student's view; and he is expected to begin precisely at that point where the most profound researches of his master have ended.

I think I have clearly "demonstrated" an error, and the very reasoning employed will almost suggest the amendment required. Suppose I were asked to describe the land-route from New-York to New-Orleans, to a person who had spent all his life in New-York, or had, perhaps, been a few stages on the Southern road. It is evident that I

might begin my itinerary at New-Orleans, or I might begin it at New-York ; but, in the former case, I should oblige my hearer to trust to his memory for a long string of names of all the different stages and railroad junctions, respecting the position of which (supposing him not to be much of a geographer) he could form no clear conception until I had brought him near to New-York. Whereas, by inverting my order, and leading him from New-York to the first stage or two, which he did know, and so on to the next stages, which he did not know, I should allow him all along the advantage of a connected chain of ideas, and enable him to unite New-York with New-Orleans through all the different stages, not only by the aid of his memory, but also of his understanding. Now this is precisely what I would have done for Anatomy. Every one has seen, and can form certain conceptions respecting a living animal : few have seen, and fewer still can comprehend your microscopic globules or your elementary particles. Commence, then, with the stages of which your pupil has some notion ; lead him from New-York to New-Orleans, not from New-Orleans to New-York. Let him begin with the end of the clew which he holds in his hand, and then he is enabled to advance steadily in place of groping darkly—he is no longer tracing the strokes and spots of a hieroglyphic inscription, but reading the words of an intelligible manuscript.

The Richmond theatre had been closed for some time ; the reign of George Jones having, by all accounts, proved destructive to the drama and discreditable to the profession. Here is another forcible illustration of the truth of what I have said elsewhere—that gross mismanagement has done more towards prostrating the drama in America, than any real declension of taste for theatrical rep-



resentation on the part of the public. Communities have too frequently been accused of want of taste in suffering the theatre to languish for want of support, when the true cause of indifference has been a disinclination to countenance vice and extravagance by open patronage. The commencement of Mr. Jones's career in Richmond was crowned with every imaginable success. His blandness of manner and specious representations were admirably calculated to impose upon a people naturally ardent and confiding: full houses and large emoluments accordingly greeted him on the first start, as an earnest of the sympathy which the plausibility of his actions had excited. But this, instead of stimulating the manager to greater exertions, appears to have slackened his energies and abated his desire to please; and the public, by abandoning his cause and absenting themselves from the theatre, have shown, not that they are indifferent to the true interests of the drama, but that they will not submit to imposition nor encourage misconduct. I have conversed with several of the principal stockholders on the subject, and I am convinced, from what I could gather, that there is every disposition on the part of the citizens of Richmond to sustain a well-conducted theatre; but nothing spurious will go down. At the earnest solicitation of several friends, I agreed to deliver a lecture on the drama previous to my departure; but the evening was so boisterous and wet that very few persons attended, and only *one* lady. On the following day, the "Star," one of the few penny papers that can be witty without being coarse, and maintain a tone of independence without descending to personalities, proposed that a medal should be struck, as a suitable reward to the lady in question for the intrepidity she had evinced on the occasion.

After visiting the tobacco factories, and whatever was most worthy of inspection in the city and environs of Richmond, I started for Washington. The cars were full of members of Congress from every section of the South and West, who were repairing to the metropolis of the Union in order to be at their post at the opening of the extra session. Their conversation on the political prospects of the country was often interesting, sometimes exciting, and always amusing—the supporters of the Tyler dynasty exulting over the downfall of the Democratic party, and the latter laughing good-humouredly at what they termed the short-lived triumph of their enemies.

In passing through Fredericksburg, which is beautifully situated not far from the margin of a goodly river, my attention was constantly attracted by a variety of objects on which the eye would fain have lingered longer. In the immediate neighbourhood of the town, in particular, the country had a very pleasing aspect : fertile plains stretching in all directions as far as the eye could reach ; verdant fields sloping down to the water's edge, studded here and there with gentlemen's seats of very elegant appearance ; in short, everything around gave evidence of the prosperity and comfort for which the "Aristocratic State" has ever been famous. I was informed, however, that the present capacities of the soil are contemptible in the extreme compared with its pristine fruitfulness. In relation to this subject, a very amusing conversation took place in the stagecoach between a member from North Carolina and a Virginian. Among other things, the former taunted the Virginians generally for reverting in such boastful terms to the former greatness of their state ; which, he said, put him in mind of an old maid, who was excessively fond of showing the rusty jewelry worn by her grandmother,

although humble herself, and in rather destitute circumstances. The North Carolinian then began to boast of the riches of his native state, and told a very amusing anecdote of the treasurer of said state, who, on being presented at the inauguration of General Harrison, was announced as the three millions man, and without debt; whereupon the gamblers, supposing it to be his own money, set upon him forthwith, in the hope of easing him of his superfluities.

I do not know how it is, but on reaching the Potomac Creek my spirits fell almost below zero: indescribable sensations of anguish and despondency seized on my very soul, and almost paralyzed me. Hitherto, however deeply my mind might have been depressed by any of those heavy weights which the untiring hand of vicissitude is so constantly letting fall upon it, it would always rise again with a sort of elastic rebound, and instantly cast off the load. But now I felt so supremely wretched, that a total aberration of intellect, or even death itself, would have been a relief to me.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

Washington City.—Former and present Impressions.—Meeting of the Extra Session.—Place-hunters and Political Adventurers.—Fuller's Hotel.—Visitors at the White House.—House of Representatives.—The M'Leod Case.—Mr. Marshall of Kentucky.—His Eloquence.—The Senate.—Sketches of Henry Clay.—Mr. Calhoun.—Mr. Preston.—Mr. Buchanan.—Mr. Benton.—Mr. Choate.—Wisdom of our Ancestors.—Prevailing Errors.—Exposition of popular Fallacies.—Random Thoughts on the Architectural Beauties and Prospect of the Capitol.—Statues of War and Peace.—Dilemma of Modern Sculptors.—Washington Theatre.—A new Attack of Illness.—The Fourth of July, and its Effects upon me.—Dr. Miller.—Convalescence.—Stephens's Travels in Central America.—Critical Remarks.—Conclusion.

It is astonishing what different views are taken of the same thing at different periods of life, and how strangely, but yet how completely, change of circumstances will revolutionize our tastes, aspirations, and opinions. When I first visited Washington in 1837, just before the inauguration of Mr. Van Buren, my thoughts were exclusively bent on pleasure. Affluence had in some respect blunted my appetite for knowledge, and my wishes for the time being seldom extended beyond the fashionable *coterie* or the glittering ballroom. My leisure hours were entirely frittered away upon vanities: the morning visit and the toilet-table occupied all the time I could spare between rising and dinner. The consequences of this curious mode of living were injurious to me in the extreme; for, although I had witnessed that august ceremony, the inauguration of a President of the United States—although I had mingled freely with the highest functionaries and most distinguished politicians—although I had seen, or been made to see, everything that could gratify curiosity or enlarge the understanding, yet I went

from Washington with scarcely a new idea in my head, and without one jot of information on the many points of interest that claim the attention of strangers in that extraordinary city. The lapse of five years brought with it a desolating train of reverses, which, while it robbed me of everything that could possibly render the pilgrimage of life a journey of pleasure and of enjoyment, also opened my eyes as to the real value of those objects which I had hitherto pursued with so much eagerness. The same Power that had almost crushed my heart with misfortune, opened also before me new sources of gratification and worthier objects of pursuit. Accordingly, my visit to Washington in June, 1841, was attended by all the excitement of novelty. Nothing appeared familiar to my memory—the very face of Nature seemed to be altered : wherever my footsteps chanced to stray, I beheld nothing but unperused faces and untrodden ground. As I gazed on the majestic front of the Capitol, I wondered that its classic beauties had never impressed themselves upon my mind before ; as I stood entranced, listening to the thrilling eloquence of the master-spirits of either legislative body, I thought it marvellously strange that I should never have been tempted to taste of this rich repast during my former visit : whatever I saw or heard, in short, in addition to its intrinsic importance, was rendered doubly attractive by the charm of novelty. Comparing my present sensations with those I had experienced before, I could hardly help considering myself a gainer by change of fortune, since it enabled me to enjoy so much. Oh ! were it possible at one glance to take a survey of the whole panorama of human life, and to trace it through all its vicissitudes, with its bright and gloomy scenes, how much should we be struck with the errors of our first opinions, as to the profitability or unprofitableness of any particular event

that may have befallen us! How often have we been induced to regard that as a calamity at the time of its occurrence, which in its actual consequences turned out a blessing!

The meeting of the extra session of Congress was, indeed, a bustling time for Washington. Never did the annals of political intrigue present such a complication of interests in collision one with the other. Every hotel and lodging-house was thronged; scarcely a room remained unoccupied anywhere, and yet strangers were pouring in by hundreds. Now out of this vast multitude of visitors to the metropolis, three fourths, at least, were applicants for places supposed to be in the gift of government, for each one of which there were from ten to twenty candidates on the spot—all cased in the panoply of purest patriotism, and each one undoubtedly considering himself far better qualified for the office sought by him than any other, and charitably representing all his competitors as persons of very little capacity or character. It speaks well for the perfection towards which the human mind is rapidly advancing, that there was not a confirmed Whig in the country, whose grasping intellect did not conceive the possibility of his being entitled to some high reward for the services which he had rendered to the state or contemplated rendering to it. From Maine to Missouri, the host of place-hunters thronged every road; and wherever any vacancy was likely to occur, even in the most petty offices, scores of aspirants started up at once to press their claims to it, each one in the hope of securing it, and benevolently wishing his rivals in the race—to the devil. Where the number of applicants so much exceeded that of the places to be disposed of, there could not but be an incalculable amount of vexation and disappointment, and no painter could have wished for a better subject than that furnished by

one half of the faces I was accustomed to meet in my daily rambles.

The most favourable position for studying human nature at this exciting crisis was from Fuller's hotel, a house where I found all the comforts of a private residence; and in the hour of sickness especially, which but too soon arrived, all the kindness and attention that one could have looked for in the midst of the most affectionate relations. Here, under the porch, would I frequently take my seat, and scrutinize the long procession of office-seekers as they wended their way, some on foot, some in carriages, to the White House. To vary the scene, the glittering equipage of some foreign minister, with coachman and servants in gay liveries and bright cockades, would sometimes sweep by, contrasting not unpleasantly with the simplicity of the rest. It was, however, the return of these political speculators that afforded me most entertainment; for then the passions had full play, and made each countenance a sure index of what was passing within. From the vivid glance of exultation to the stupid stare of vacancy, and so down to the gloomy air of disappointment, and the fiendish expression indicating rage, despair, or bitter resentment, all was vividly portrayed, and told, in language not to be mistaken, the fate of the individual. It was sometimes a pitiable, sometimes a pleasing sight to behold! The picture at times, however, was too disgusting and frightfully hideous to be contemplated with any but unmingled feelings of detestation or contempt. Well, so the world goes! Your true Democrat, nothing disconcerted by what he considers as merely a temporary reverse, consoles himself with the belief that locofocoism will soon rise again, like a Phoenix from its ashes; while your veritable Whig, elated by the possession of power, will not allow that even any ashes have been left for it to rise from.

The day for the meeting of Congress at length arrived, and I was very early on the spot. The business transacted at the commencement of the session was, however, of a very tedious nature, consisting principally of fruitless attempts to elect officers for the two houses, and several days were spent in these trials before they were all chosen. It was not till the celebrated M'Leod case came under consideration in the Senate, that there was any display of oratory. The same subject was very ably discussed in the House of Representatives; but the frequent calls to order in that body, and the habit of several persons speaking at the same time—an exhibition which, I regret to say, I very often witnessed—were so very disagreeable, that, after hearing Mr. Marshall's highly argumentative speech, I confined my visits exclusively to the Senate. I cannot leave the House of Representatives, however, without expressing my admiration of the speech here alluded to. I have seldom listened to an orator so quick in apprehension; so fertile in imagination, allusion, and association; so just and happy in his figures, and so uniformly correct and classical in his language. There is something so captivating and inspiring in Mr. Marshall's eloquence, that, while it convinces the understanding, it completely subdues the heart—by a power strong as that of Æolus in chaining the winds; and I am mistaken much if there is a man in that assembly capable of exercising this power in a higher degree.

Few subjects have probably been brought before the Senate of the United States which have been more ably discussed, or have called forth a more brilliant display of eloquence, than the M'Leod question. Not even in the stormy period of the Revolution, when there were so many exciting topics to stir men's minds—when so many truly great men stood forth as the champions of freedom—could there have



been exhibited higher powers of mind. I have heard of the eloquence of Patrick Henry, who could move his audience with a power like that of the fabled Orpheus ; and of Fisher Ames, who, in his memorable speech upon the adoption of the British treaty, standing, as he did, on the very verge of the grave, produced, by the music of his periods, the thrilling intonations of his voice, and the kindling of his countenance, an effect like that of the enchanter's spell ; and I have listened to many deeply interesting discussions in both houses of the British Parliament ; but I can conceive of nothing superior to the eloquence displayed in this great debate. Reason, persuasion, entreaty, invective, pathos, were, by turns, brought to bear upon a question which threatened a sudden disruption of all friendly relations between two great powers, and an inveterate and sanguinary war.

First and foremost rose Henry Clay, who, without the discipline of schools, possesses, as by inspiration, more of the qualities of a great orator than other men can acquire by study. He came to the point at once ; the quickness of his perception, and his perfect knowledge of the subject, rendering him impatient of all circumlocution. Uniting, as he does, a brilliant imagination with deep sagacity—a feeling of the tender and the touching with a love of the satirical, it is not surprising that he should be sometimes more dazzling than accurate. On this occasion he exhibited an alacrity of fancy, a quickness of wit, and originality of remark that seemed inexhaustible. His power of illustration was no less remarkable ; and his exuberant imagination gave freshness and interest to the most barren points of his subject. Those who would realize the wonders which can be wrought by genius should have listened to Henry Clay on this celebrated question. He was succeeded by Mr. Calhoun—the great cham-

pion of Democracy—who, although for the most part mild and philosophical, can, when the occasion calls for it, be stern and sarcastic in the highest degree—not contenting himself with flashes of wit and strokes of irony, but literally flaying his adversary while he exposes the weakness or the falsity of his arguments. It seems to me that few orators, either of ancient or modern times, have possessed in an equal degree that power of rigid analysis which is capable of resolving an idea into its minutest elements. To enable his hearers clearly to distinguish differences where their minds previously saw none, appears to be the most striking attribute of the wonderfully discriminating mind of Mr. Calhoun. He seized upon the weak points of Mr. Clay's argument, and held them up to the pity of his sympathizing friends, with all that adroitness which knows how to turn the position of an enemy as if by magic. His thrilling voice fairly electrified that great assembly, and many turned pale at his fierce denunciations. There was something in the perfect hush—the eloquent stillness of the audience—where the faintest whisper would have been audible, more expressive of the speaker's power than would have been the loudest acclamations. Then followed Messrs. Preston and Buchanan, both of whom combine some of the highest attributes of oratory; and these distinguished senators, though their speeches continued for several days, were heard to the last without weariness; the strong sense, felicitous language, and brilliant touches of the one, and the luxuriant fancy, poetic diction, and bitter raillery of the other, keeping the attention of the audience constantly awake. At length the renowned Missouri leviathan, Mr. Benton, rose, who, notwithstanding his erratic and desultory declamation, and the capital defect of not always speaking to his subject, never fails to secure universal attention. Strong, bold,

and impetuous, his course is like that of the mountain torrent. His mind is but little stored with historical reminiscences, nor is he familiar with classical lore; but he makes up for these deficiencies by the earnestness of his manner, and a peculiar style of irony which never fails to hit, and with stinging effect, the point at which it is aimed. The charm by which we are carried along—the spell by which we are bound—the conviction to which, for the moment, we are obliged to yield, though the moment after our opinions may be as wide from his as the poles, are very difficult to be accounted for or described. His speech in reply to Mr. Preston was a curious piece of mosaic, in which the brilliant and party-coloured fragments seemed to have been selected from Fourth of July orations and cant colloquial phrases: it was a curious combination of turgid epithets and bitter sarcasm, dealt out with an unsparing hand, and of fierce declamations about liberty—meant to be sublime.

The oratory of Mr. Benton shows no mark of having been formed on any model: it is wordy, figurative, always full of conceit, and generally encumbered with high-sounding epithets, and almost entirely destitute of adaptation or fitness. But of all the orators who spoke on this occasion, there was not one, in my opinion, whose speech was so much to the purpose, or who so ably explained the laws of nations, as Mr. Choate of Massachusetts—the talented successor of Daniel Webster. This gentleman possesses all the essential elements of oratory: he has great quickness of apprehension; his knowledge is extensive and various; his language lively and pointed; he can adorn the most barren topic with his playful fancy, and render the dullest agreeable. He never embroils himself in personalities; or, if he chances to dip his wing in the turbid stream of invective, he at once rises again

into the upper air, as if ashamed of his descent. In richness and variety of learning—in boundless command of language—in fecundity of thought and range of analysis, Mr. Choate cannot certainly compare with his illustrious predecessor; but he excels him in harmony of diction, in amenity of manner, and in susceptibility of the tender and pathetic. He is always direct, fervid, and compressed; while the blandness of his expression, the fire of his eye, and the music of his voice, make an impression which must be felt to be understood.

During the debate allusion was frequently made to the "wisdom of our ancestors;" one party really believing that our ancestors were wiser than we are, and the other gravely denouncing the expression as a mischievous sophism, and honouring it with a regular logical refutation, the apparent ingenuity of which deserves to be noticed. "The wisdom of our ancestors," says one, "is a mischievous sophism; as it is age that confers wisdom, and inasmuch as we are an older generation than those which have preceded us, we must be wiser." Now, this may be very clever reasoning, but, unfortunately, it is entirely misapplied. By the wisdom of our ancestors is not meant any authority over us, but the sanction which their adoption and approval lend to certain institutions derived from them. The phrase is somewhat indefinite, but still perfectly intelligible: wisdom is ascribed to those who devised certain institutions, because the experience of all succeeding generations has shown them to be beneficial; and hence we are ready to defend such institutions, not because they originated with a past generation, but because they have answered their object well through successive generations. Another consideration leads us to the source of the misapplications of historical authority which are so frequently witnessed, namely, an utter forgetfulness

of the modifying circumstances which limited the utility of a particular institution to some certain period or place. "Laws against witchcraft, writs *de heretico comburendo*, etc., formed part of the *wisdom* of our ancestors," say certain critics. Well, so they did. The opinions prevalent in any society are an integral portion of that society's constitution, and must, as such, be consulted by the legislator. If the belief in witchcraft were as general now as it was formerly, it might be well that those laws should be revived and put in operation. They were wise laws so long as they were in accordance with the habits, the feelings, and the belief of the age; but, after these had changed, the preservation of such laws would be monstrous folly.

Perhaps the most ludicrous exemplification of this tendency to search for abstract principles in history, with a complete disregard of modifying circumstances, is to be found in the disputes respecting the early constitution of England. Practically to the politician, it is not worth a single straw whether the Saxon monarchy was as despotic as that of Russia, or as republican as that of France—whether the Wittenagemot was an annual parliament or a privy council. The settling of this question would not confer a single additional right on prince or people; for constitutions are not to be framed for non-existent customs, departed feelings, forgotten habits, and modes of faith and practice that have long since sunk into oblivion, but must be suited to the circumstances of the period in which they are adopted. How often have I heard some such conversation as the following: "Avoid such a change, for it will lead to a revolution." "That is the very reason," replies the person addressed, "that I will support it." But, in fact, the reasons assigned by both amount precisely to—nothing. A word of four syllables may sound very well, and roll glibly off the

tongue, but it must not be mistaken for an argument. A revolution may be a great or a small change—may be a blessing or a curse—may lead to happiness or misery—or may eventually leave matters pretty nearly as it found them. Of all these different kinds of revolutions we have examples in history; and to quote one of them, *per se*, as a parallel, without showing that the circumstances are precisely similar, is an evidence either of folly or knavery. Magna Charta was a revolution, the Bill of Rights was a revolution, and Christianity the greatest revolution of all; and to assert that there should be no more revolutions, is to declare that the only duty of a legislature is to register absurdities and consecrate abuses. Just as ridiculous is the contrary position, that benefits alone must result from every revolution. I have witnessed one, at least, where the price paid was vastly disproportionate to the benefit received. History, studied carefully and diligently, with a critical examination of all contingent circumstances, is an invaluable practical guide; but, read lightly and negligently, or examined only to furnish matter for a brilliant period, it is worse “than an old almanac,” and is far more likely to mislead than to instruct. The hackneyed quotation of Pope is, in reference to this subject, most apposite:

“There, shallow draughts intoxicate the brain,  
But drinking largely sobers it again.”

The reader need be under no apprehension of my attempting to give an elaborate description of the Capitol, though I might do so with perfect safety; for I do not believe there is one in a hundred among the thousands who pass by it every day, that has ever looked at it at all; while those who have, seem to want either taste to perceive its beauties, or enthusiasm to admire them. They will go to Paris or London, and stare at everything in stupid won-

der, and then come back and pass this magnificent edifice almost without seeming to know it stands here. For my own part, I admire the simple elegance of this proud structure the more for its having none of the false glare and glitter which interfere so much with totality of effect in most modern buildings. I am bigoted enough to have a leaning towards the chaste, in preference to the gaudy style of architecture, and shall ever continue to have, until it be shown to me that reason does not enter into our feeling of beauty, as well as sense. If it do, the matter is easily determinable. Where any architectural system has for its basis simplicity of form (as in the Greek), simplicity of decoration should likewise obtain; and a temple of sun-white Parian will be more beautiful than if its coigns were cut out of a petrified rainbow. Of the two fronts presented to the eye in the Capitol, the one which looks immediately up the Pennsylvania Avenue is the most regular, and produces the finest general effect; while the parterre of beautifully preserved turf at the foot of it, studded with flowering shrubs and evergreens, and encircled by a luxuriant growth of trees and plants, is so consistent with the general character of all around, that it would seem to have been placed there by Nature herself, as a tribute of admiration to the spirit in which the Capitol has been built. Without these little adjuncts, the edifice, notwithstanding its stately simplicity (which, by-the-by, is admirably indicative of the times in which it was constructed and the purposes to which it was intended to be applied), would present an appearance of cold and naked loneliness, not ill harmonizing, perhaps, with the scenery in the midst of which it is placed; but, with these, it becomes divorced, as it were, from that scenery, and forms a consistent part of the gay creation below. The ivy that hangs in luxuriant tresses at the base of the

building is the connecting link which marries it to the rich dahlias, the fragrant groves of roses, and the lovely meads by which it is on all sides surrounded. Those green tresses, again, produce the effect of a few simple curls, scattered with studied negligence about the features of a stately beauty, who is too proud of her charms to choose to attire them in the reigning mode, or is, perhaps, conscious that they would lose their peculiar attraction if she did.

Well, but I promised to abstain from description, and here I am travelling at the rate of thirteen knots an hour, over the very ground I had purposed to avoid, till I hardly know my way back again. And yet I cannot take my leave of this subject without paying my devoirs to two statues of colossal magnitude, that guard the other entrance of the Capitol. These represent *Peace* and *War*, and are executed on the regular sugar-loaf principle. Anatomy, drapery, and sentiment are in excellent keeping; but the style is in that of the prevailing compromise between classic and popular, or, in other words, the select mongrel—*his* head approaching the barbaric wedge, or fiddle-shape—*hers* the Grecian oval. Certainly, we poor moderns are in a grand dilemma about sculpture! We can never be Greek, and no one is Michael enough to be independently and proudly Gothic; yet this is the sole ground we can ever make our own—high, broad, firm, and consecrated by our religion; but, forsooth, it is nobler to claim a bastard consanguinity with Phidias, who disowns us, than a legitimate one with Michael, who would give us a heritage. I would not recommend our statuaries to commence torturers of marble by way of turning out Michael Angelos; or consider Buonarotti's eccentric orbit as a cometary example of the regular one, to be approximated by a system of corrections applied to its elements; *videlicet*, those akin to our Gothic na-



ture and modern mythology. It seems to me as though we had small chance of competing with the Greeks by clambering up the sides of their Parnassus—much less by keeping one foot upon that, and the other on a hillock of our own, more than a seven-league stride asunder.

A return of the illness, whose attacks I had hitherto warded off with considerable success, at last put an end to all my wanderings, mental and corporeal, and confined me for several weeks to my bed. I had just commenced an engagement at the Washington theatre, and opened in Hamlet; but the exertion of the first night proved too much for my debilitated state of health, and the following day found me utterly prostrated by a raging fever. Oh! the sufferings that I experienced from the cruel heat of that oppressive summer! The Fourth of July alone, with its interminable train of accompanying evils—the firing of cannon—the incessant explosions of combustible matter close under my very windows—all the various kinds of human and inhuman noises, enough to fret an ailing man into the likeness of a porcupine—effected more, after all, I seriously believe, towards restoring me to health, than all the drugs that the whole tribe of pharmacopæists could have prepared. In fact, my body had become so completely topsy-turvyfied by irritation, as to be a very unfit tenement for any disease that had sufficient energy to locate itself elsewhere. During this tedious sickness, I was particularly fortunate to find, in the person of Dr. Miller, a physician who, to superior professional skill and unremitting attention, adds powers of conversation of a very high order, with that peculiar gentleness of manner which goes to the heart of the patient, converting the professional visit into an office of friendship.

The first thing that attracted my attention, as

soon as I had attained a state of convalescence, was Stephens's book of "Travels in Central America," which had just appeared, and which I devoured with an eagerness that can only be understood by those who, like me, have an especial friendship for travellers of Mr. Stephens's school—which is the farthest possible remove from that of those worthy and scrupulous people who, as they pass deliberately from country to country, will not let a rivulet murmur by without telling you its birth and parentage—who are not content to omit a single shapeless ruin, or a solitary dull town; and who, consulting exclusively their own personal feelings and fancies, describe everything in the same level phrase, and with the same remorseless minuteness. But from works such as Mr. Stephens has produced we reap a rich harvest of originality. They open up new scenes for contemplation; they exhibit new manners, strange customs, striking incidents; and really contribute more to our amusement even, than the most brilliant novelist, whose trade it is to supply the great market of the world with agreeable fictions.

Since the days when I hung with rapture over the pages of Cook's Voyages, and felt myself inspired with some portion of the enthusiasm that animated the adventurous navigator, I have met with no work by which I have been more delighted and instructed than by the Travels of Mr. Stephens. The route to Guatemala is replete with objects of interest to the historian, the geographer, and the merchant; and the traveller, in this case, happily combined in himself all the qualifications requisite for acquiring the information which would be most acceptable to every class of readers. Possessing untiring energy, quick powers of observation, and strong common sense, Mr. Stephens appears to have been predestined to the task of exploring

Central America, and to have entered upon it as upon his own peculiar province, with that regulated enthusiasm which the mind experiences when it has discovered the track which nature designed it to pursue. This is a subject of extreme interest, whether we consider it as connected with the history of the human race, or as furnishing facts illustrating the state of certain arts and sciences at the remote period to which Mr. Stephens's book refers. Under the former head, it shows us that mankind were, even in those early days, divided into varieties, separated from each other by distinctions as wide as those which now exist, and, consequently, that such varieties, if we suppose them derived from a common stock, must have originated within a portion of time comparatively short; and within which, also, modifying circumstances must have necessarily been much fewer than in the subsequent periods of refinement and civilization; during which, nevertheless, no new variety has arisen. Under the latter, it presents us with a strange mixture of knowledge and ignorance—of magnificence and meanness—highly interesting from the lights it is likely to throw on subjects of much obscurity. Everything indicates the existence of an art at present unknown to the nations of this continent, and goes far to prove that America, though called the New World, is at least quite as *old* as any other portion of our globe.

And now my task is ended: the Potomac lies behind me; and to it, and to the sunny South, and the thousand endearing objects embraced within its hospitable borders, I bid a hearty, but reluctant FAREWELL!

THE END.

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